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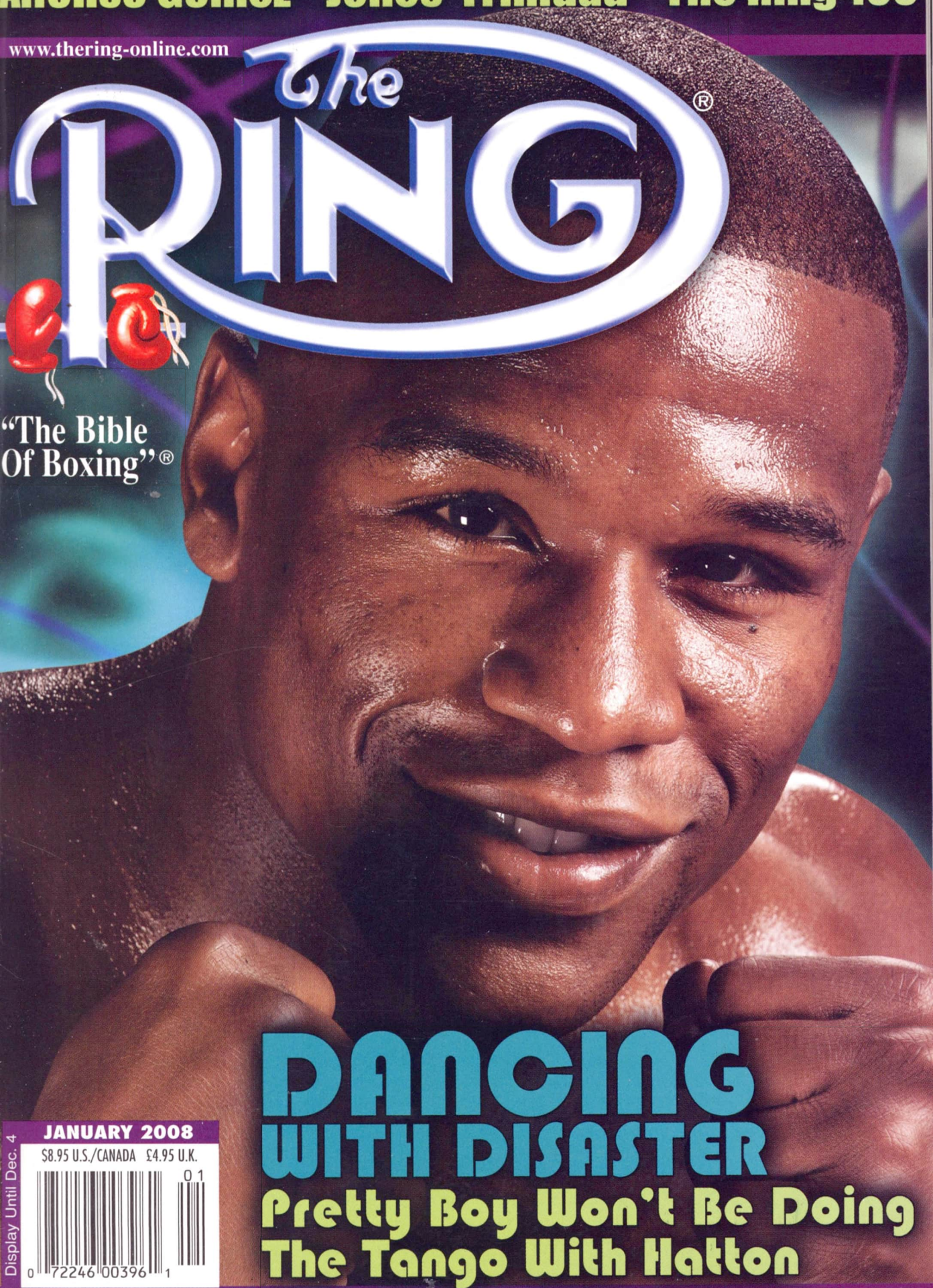

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Aug. 1982: Michael Spinks & Howard Davis Jr.: Different Destinies On The Road From Montreal. Also: Richard Sandoval, Big John Tate, Jimmy Bradock, 1956 in review.

Feb. 1983: Howard Davis Jr.: "Why I'll Win The Lightweight Title This Time!" Also: Snipes, Fletcher-Green, Mustafa Muhammad, Tubbs.

April 1983: "The Pain From The Tragedy Has Passed," By Ray Mancini. Also: Broad, Hearns-Benitez, 1982 in review.

BIG BOOK OF BOXING

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March 1984: Suppose Sugar Ray Leonard Never Retired, Part I. Also: Tunney, lightweights, Pep-Pedroza dream fight.

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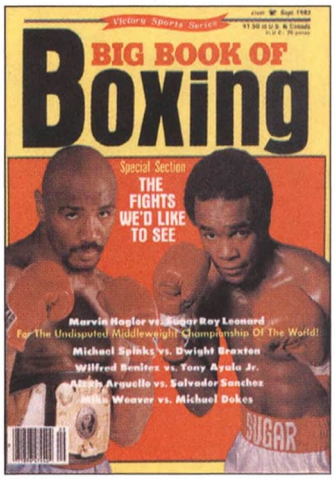

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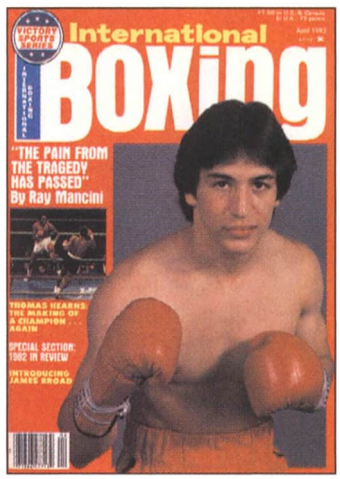

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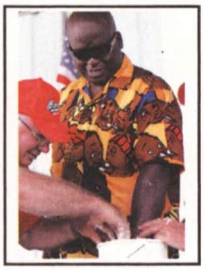


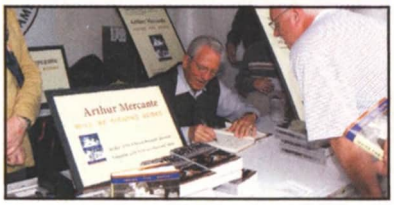
Everlasting . . . Fist cast by James "Buster" Douglas.

PARADE OF CHAMPIONS

Marvelous . . . Marvin Hagler waves to fans.

Hooray . . . George Foreman enjoys fans along parade route.

BOOK SIGNINGS



Hall of Fame referee Arthur Mercante signs his autobiography for the fans.

MUSEUM GROUNDS

Autographs . . . "Sweet Pea" Pernell Whitaker spends time signing autographs on the Museum grounds.

5K RACE, FUN RUN

Finish Line . . . "Irish" Micky Ward in stride.

Go . . . Ken Norton officially starts race of celebrity boxers and runners.

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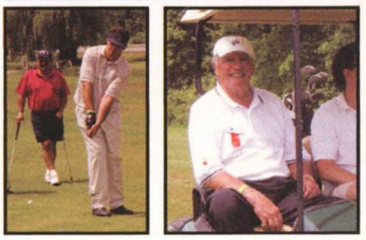


Chip . . . Gerry Cooney (l) chips onto 18th green while Sir Henry Cooper (r) is enroute to next tee.

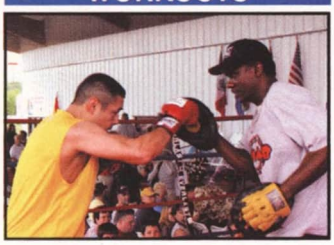
COCKTAIL PARTY

Stars . . . Boxers and fans enjoy VIP cocktail party reception.

MUSEUM

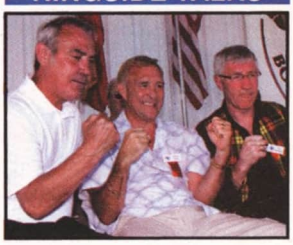
Ricardo Lopez points to his championship trunks.

WORKOUTS



Oscar Diaz works the bag mitts with Tommy Brooks during public workout.

RINGSIDE TALKS



Minter, Stracey, and Buchanan provide stories.

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Opening Shot

Out Of Focus

Vivian Harris' eyes are wide open, but at this point he probably has no idea of what is happening around him. Well, across the ring at England's Doncaster Dome, his opponent, WBC super lightweight titlist Junior Witter, is celebrating one of the most conclusive knockouts of his career (one minute into the seventh round) and already thinking about the money he can make if world champion Ricky Hatton ever accepts his challenge. As for Harris, he thankfully recovered, but after suffering such a devastating loss, his future in this sport is very much in doubt.

PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

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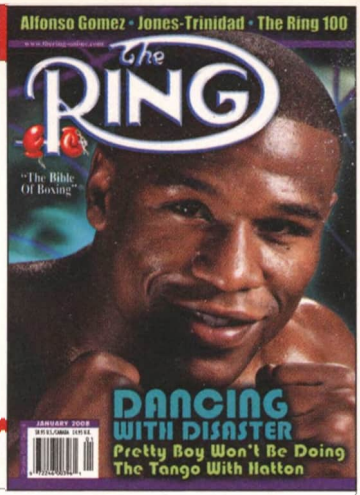

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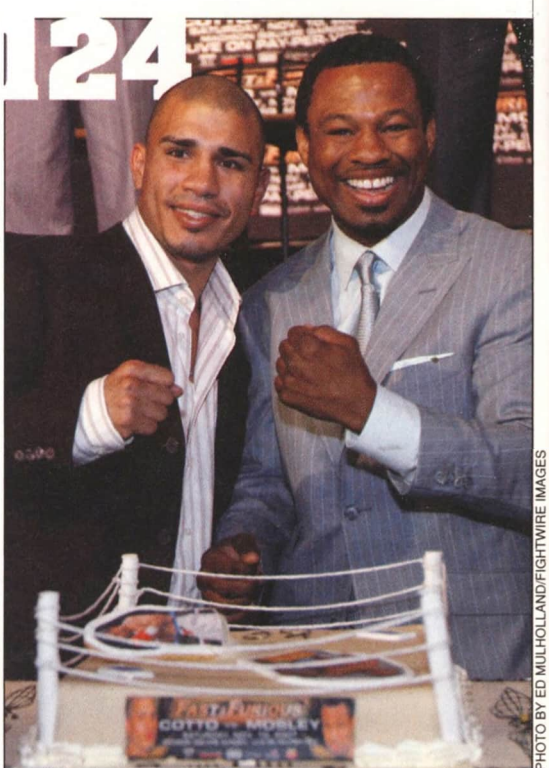

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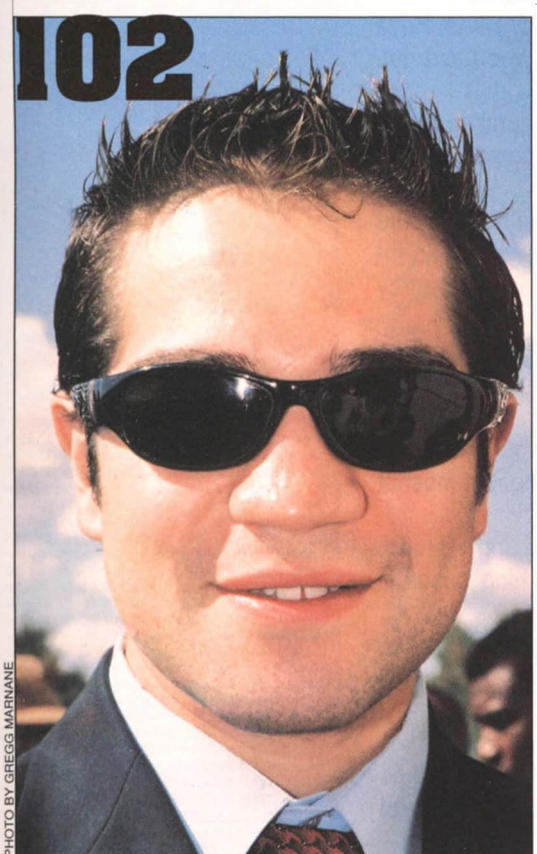

PHOTO BY GREGG MARNANE

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The RING

It turns out Oscar De La Hoya and I have more in common than I thought. And I'm not talking about our bank balances or reflections in the mirror.

Oscar recently said that as a kid he was "always waiting with anticipation to get the new issue of THE RING." Sounds a lot like me when I was in junior high, constantly popping into Kroll's luncheonette to see if the new issue was on the rack.

Oscar also said that owning THE RING was "a dream come true." And while not even my subconscious could imagine ever having enough money to own the magazine, contributing to it in some fashion was a fantasy I entertained from boyhood. Years later, when I became an unpaid stringer, I allowed that fantasy to morph into an aspiration that eventually became my life's work.

Our journeys have been dissimilar in both direction and duration, but today Oscar and I have both fulfilled our youthful fantasy, and now share the bond of responsibility. As owner and editor, our mission is to guide the publication to greater prosperity, while preserving the integrity and tradition that has been its hallmark since Nat Fleischer launched THE RING in 1922.

It is, of course, its history of integrity and independence that has allowed THE RING to become more that just a periodical. Since Fleischer's pioneering campaign to eradicate boxing's so-called "color bar" during the early years of his stewardship, THE RING has been a guiding light for a sport that has a proclivity for controversy.

Therefore, I both understand and respect those who are concerned about the current situation and its potential for conflict of interest. Having an active fighter, who is also one of the sport's foremost promoters, own the magazine could conceivably mean the end of the autonomous impartiality that has made THE RING the Bible of Boxing. It's a natural fear, but one that I firmly believe will prove unfounded.

Many of you have probably read the reassuring statements made by De La Hoya and Golden Boy Promotions CEO Richard Schaefer, but for those who have not, they are well worth repeating:

"The magazine will be held in an editorial trust where it will be operating totally independent of any influence from me or others from Golden Boy companies as it relates to the editorial direction or content," said De La Hoya.

"We won't attempt to influence the editorial content. If we did that, it would achieve exactly the opposite of what we want ... if we turned THE RING into an in-house publication for Golden Boy, it would lose its reputation and we would destroy our investment," said Schaefer.

While keeping the editorial content entirely independent makes good business sense, it was Oscar's boyhood love of THE RING that persuaded me more than anything of his sincerity. It struck a cord that reverberated down through the years to my own early infatuation with the magazine and convinced me Oscar would never do anything to bring dishonor to an institution we've both cherished throughout most of our lives.

Although you have my word of honor, along with those of Oscar and Richard, the proof of our sincerity will be found on the pages of this and upcoming issues of THE RING.

Rather than a dark day, the new ownership is the dawning of a bright, new era, one that will bring many positive changes, changes that I will be telling you about in the coming months.

Nigel Collins
Editor-in-Chief

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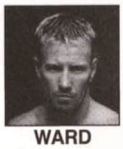

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Celebrating A Living Legend

Certain fights stand out among the millions as hallmarks of greatness, fights that still resonate with lovers of the Sweet Science decades after the final bell. One of those was the first fight between Ray Robinson and Carmen Basilio in which welterweight champion Basilio won the middleweight championship with a 15-round decision over Sugar Ray on September 23, 1957, in front of more than 38,000 fans at Yankee Stadium.

On September 19, 2007, the City of Syracuse celebrated the 50th anniversary of Basilio's greatest victory, with the 80-year-old former welterweight and middleweight champion as the guest of honor at the OnCenter Convention Center.

PHOTO BY PAT ORR

DeMarco helps Basilio celebrate his historic victory over Robinson

Although Basilio hails form nearby Canastota, he fought 31 of his 79 pro bouts in Syracuse, including three world title fights, and is considered a native son throughout the upstate New York region. Syracuse Mayor Matt Driscoll also declared September 19 "Carmen Basilio Day."

Robinson died in 1989, but former rival Tony DeMarco, from whom Basilio won the welterweight title in 1955, was on hand to honor his old foe, as were approximately 200 people who paid $125 each to attend the event. The celebration also served as a book launching for *The Onion Farmer*, a new Basilio biography by Gary B. Youmans.

PHOTO BY PAT ORR

Basilio is still a media magnet

"Carmen loved every second of it," said photographer Pat Orr. "He signed autographs and posed for pictures non-stop throughout the two-hour cocktail party."

Guests were also treated to a screening of the entire first bout with Robinson, which was THE RING's Fight of the Year. It was the third of an unprecedented streak in which Basilio competed in five consecutive Fights of the Year, from 1955 through '59.

"After the formal presentations, Carmen told the story of how he'd dreamed of becoming a boxing champion since

he was a teenager," said Ed Brophy, executive director of the International Boxing Hall of Fame, which is located in Canastota. "He recalled telling one of his school teachers that he was going to be world champion and how many of his classmates laughed at him. Carmen was a big fan of the New York Yankees and one of his dreams was to fight in Yankee Stadium, so when he fought Robinson there, he asked to enter from the Yankee dugout. When he made his ring walk, there were tears in his eyes, and afterward, he went down on his knees in the ring and thanked the Lord for allowing his dream to come true."

Bloody Basilio on the attack against Sugar Ray

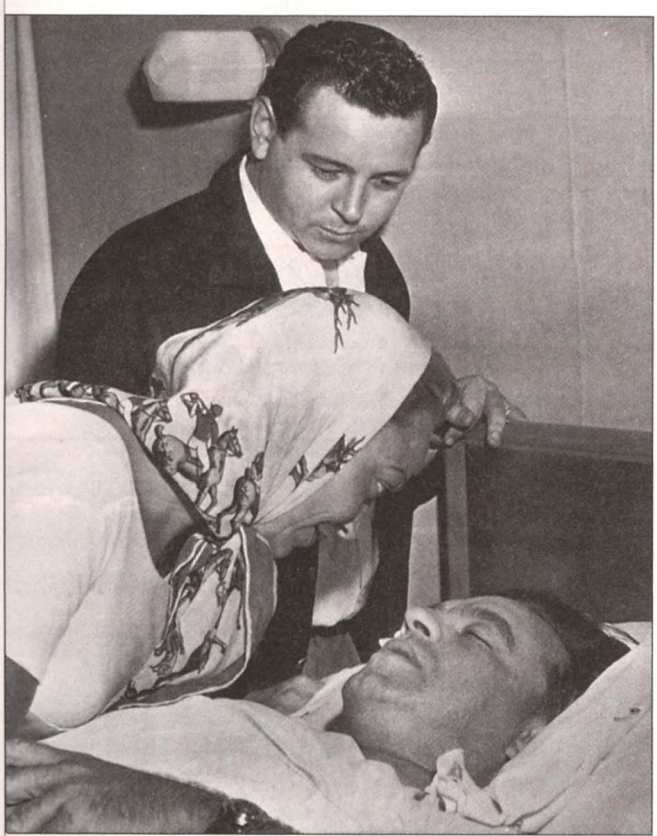
Basilio was always a rough, tough character, but also a genuinely friendly man who loves to mingle with the people and joke around. With so many of our great champions gone, it is a special treat to still have Carmen among us, and the celebration of his win over Robinson was the perfect occasion to show him how much he still means to so many.

Jack Leonard: 1917-2007

"You son of a bitch double-crosser. You are no good. Your word is no good. Nothing is good about you."

After Frankie Carbo was done telling Jack Leonard what he thought of him in Leonard's office at Hollywood Legion Stadium, where he promoted the weekly fights that brought out the movie stars and starlets in the 1950s, Leonard did something perfectly reasonable under the circumstances.

He ran into the bathroom and puked his guts out.



Promoter Leonard is visited by his wife, Jeanne, and matchmaker Don Chargin following beating

Getting on the bad side of the onetime Murder Inc. triggerman could be a deadly mistake. In the 1940s and '50s, Carbo was the underworld czar of boxing who controlled fighters, managers, promoters, and titles, and whose unhappiness with anyone who challenged him was often communicated via a lead pipe to the skull.

In 1958, when Carbo demanded 50 percent control of welterweight champion Don Jordan, Leonard, Jordan's co-manager and himself a former fighter who lost twice to Henry Armstrong, said the one word nobody interested in staying healthy ever said to boxing's feared "Mr. Gray": No.

"You'll never get away with it!" snarled Carbo. Not long afterward, Leonard was attacked and beaten in his garage. The feds gave Leonard around-the-clock protection when he was the star witness at Carbo's 1961 racketeering trial, and after Carbo was sent off to Alcatraz to start a 25-year prison sentence, Leonard went into the Witness Protection Program and spent the next two decades shuttling from job to job in the United States and overseas and ducking the $50,000 mob bounty on his head.

In the late-1980s, he surfaced in Winter Haven, Florida. Carbo was dead, and Leonard got himself a gym and started handling fighters again.

"Maybe boxing is a disease," he told writer William Plummer in 1991. "It sure does get in your blood."

No thanks to Frankie Carbo, it wasn't a fatal disease for Jack Leonard, and when he passed away in a nursing home on August 28, Leonard had lived 89 full years. Even the newspapers that don't give much play to boxing anymore noted his passing, and one of the fighters developed by Leonard, undefeated pro welterweight Andre Berto, called him "a great man" who "really cared about his fighters and the sport of boxing."

Maybe boxing ought to return the favor by making Jack Leonard a lead-pipe cinch for the Hall of Fame.

—Pete Ehrmann

TV Fights of the Month

Compiled By Martin Mulcahey

DATE	WINNER/LOSER	NETWORK	DIVISION	SIGNIFICANCE	MATCHUP	RESULT
8/17/07	Jesus Soto Karass KO 3 Jose Ojeda	Telefutura	w	C	C-	C
Karass throws a mean low blow for someone so tall						
8/17/07	Tyrone Harris W 10 Rafael Ortiz	ESPN2	l	C	C	C
Harris lets Ortiz off the hook in first round, forced to go 10 as punishment						
8/17/07	Jason Litzau KO 2 Emmanuel Lucero	ESPN2	f	C+	D	D
The only thing this proved is that Lucero didn't really want to be there						
8/18/07	Peter Quillin KO 1 Jose Humberto Corral	PPV	m	D	F	D-
Horrible matchmaking; Corral has yet to beat a fighter with a win on his record						
8/18/07	Jeremy Williams W 8 Gary Gomez	PPV	c	C	C+	C+
Two-year layoff did Williams no favors; the judges might have						
8/18/07	David Tua KO 1 Saul Montana	PPV	h	B-	C	C+
What was more impressive, the kayo or Tua's weight?						
8/24/07	Mike Alvarado KO 8 Jorge Padilla	Telefutura	w	C	C+	C
Size, low blows, and speed of Alvarado sink former Mexican amateur star						
8/24/07	Guadalupe Rosales W 10 Marcos Licona	Telefutura	jl	C+	C+	C-
Rosales' hotdog antics might not play well with Mexican faithful; there's only one Paez						
8/24/07	Alfredo Escalera Jr. W 8 Harvey Jolley	ESPN2	c	D	C	C
Son of former jr. lightweight champ proves apple can indeed fall far from the tree						
8/24/07	Delvin Rodriguez NC 2 Keenan Collins	ESPN2	w	C-	C-	D
ESPN2 treats footage of cut as if it's the Zapruder film						
8/25/07	Edel Ruiz KO 5 Marcos Leonardo	PPV	f	C-	C	B
Veteran climbs of the canvas to teach prospect a lesson						
8/25/07	Roman Martinez KO 12 Daniel Jimenez	PPV	l	C+	B	A-
Contenders upstage main event; relentless pressure of Martinez is the difference						
8/25/07	**Ivan Calderon W 12 Hugo Cazares**	**PPV**	**world jfl**	**A-**	**A**	**B**
This is a PPV main event, surely the seventh sign of the apocalypse						
8/30/07	Victor Ortiz KO 10 Emmanuel Clottey	Versus	w	C	C	C+
Fans and Ortiz' patience rewarded with a final round kayo						
8/30/07	Miguel Huerta W 12 Efren Hinojosa	Versus	l	C+	B	B-
Extra wide ring was needed to contain Huerta's looping hooks						
8/31/07	Tomas Villa D 10 Fernando Lizarraga	Telefutura	jf	C	B	A-
Two Mexicans with average records produce a great fight						
8/31/07	Yori Boy Campas W Norberto Bravo	Telefutura	jm	C	C	B-
Win encapsulates Campas' career: tough, workmanlike, and enjoyable						
8/31/07	Juan Urango KO 4 Nasser Athumani	ESPN2	jw	C+	C	B-
Athumani has a great body for a 38-year-old, even when stretched out horizontally						
8/31/07	Shamone Alvarez W 12 Germaine Sanders	ESPN2	w	C	C	C+
Methodical Alvarez stays unbeaten but fails to thrill						
9/01/07	Fulgencio Zuniga KO 9 Victor Oganov	Showtime	sm	C+	B	B
Is Oganov Russian for overrated?						
9/09/07	Antonio Escalante KO 5 Feider Viloria	Telefutura	f	C	C	B
Overconfident Escalante hurt by smaller Viloria early, but finishes job in style						
9/09/07	Abner Mares KO 7 Isidro Garcia	Telefutura	b	C+	C+	B
Mexican Olympian looked tremendous defeating his first former titleholder						
9/09/07	Antonio de Marco W 10 Nick Casal	Showtime	l	C	B	B+
De Marco has the body of a praying mantis						
9/09/07	Adam Richards DQ 4 Rafael Pedro	ESPN2	h	C-	C	C
Richards shows restraint despite "Swamp Donkey" nickname						
9/09/07	Zab Judah W 10 Edwin Vazquez	ESPN2	w	B-	C-	C
Zab mails it in						

Category Explanation: "Significance"—The importance of the bout to the division and the fighters' futures; "Matchup"—The quality of the fighters and the prefight determination of how their styles will mesh; "Result"—How the bout turned out, from the viewer's perspective.

(RING championship fights in **bold** type)

Division key: h—heavyweight; c—cruiserweight; lh—light heavyweight; sm—super middleweight; m—middleweight; jm—junior middleweight; w—welterweight; jw—junior welterweight; l—lightweight; jl—junior lightweight; f—featherweight; jf—junior featherweight; b—bantamweight; jb—junior bantamweight; fl—flyweight; jfl—junior flyweight; s—strawweight

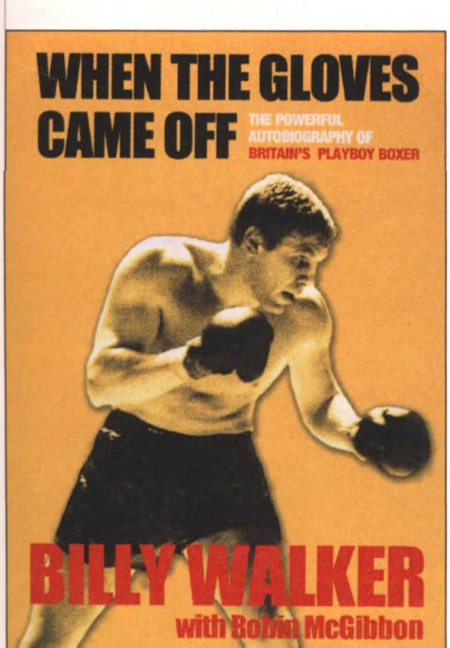
Network key: PPV—Pay-Per-View; Show—Showtime; FOXSN—Fox Sports Net;Uni—Univision; Telef—Telefutura; Telem—Telemundo; HBO L—HBO Latino; Versus

Boxing Bookshelf

He never came close to a world title and lost challenges for the British and European belts. But while 'Enery Cooper may have been the most beloved British heavyweight of the 1960s, nobody put more arses into the seats of John Bull arenas than "Golden Boy" Billy Walker. It started when he was national amateur heavyweight champion and kayoed his American counterpart in one round in 1961, and continued through a 21-8-2 (16) pro career that saw Walker become, in the words of promoter Harry Levine, "the biggest box-office attraction in British boxing history."

A hearty swinger outside the ropes too—his motto was, "Win or lose, plenty of booze"—Walker's life story, *When The Gloves Came Off: The Powerful Autobiography Of Britain's Playboy Boxer* (Robson Books, hardcover, 266 pages, £16.99), co-authored with Robin McGibbon, is as wide-open and beguiling as Walker's face-first losing fights against Cooper, Karl Mildenberger, Brian London, and Jack Bodell.

Booze wasn't the only thing he looked forward to after his fights. "Fame and power are strong aphrodisiacs, and I made full use of both," says the once self-confessed "male chauvinist pig to end them all" who "always—*always*—had a girl waiting for me at the end of the night." (When the woman who is now Walker's wife once said reprovingly that he would "have sex with anything that moved," he replied, "That's not true. It would have to be female.")



Along the way there were two failed marriages, the loss of a lover to cancer, financial peaks and valleys, and Walker's most contentious relationship of all—with his older brother, George, who managed Billy's boxing career and their joint business empire until their estrangement, which continues today. Both worshipful and fearful of George, Billy escaped the mandatory two years of national service by following his brother's instructions to behave like a moron at the physical, but in the midst of his fighting career decided that "maybe [George] loved me only because I was earning him money." Things went downhill from there, and George didn't even attend when Billy married his current wife. "I'd invited him, but George was working," Billy writes. "Seventy-six years old and too busy to attend his brother's wedding! Nothing changes."

Like the author, it's a candid and likeable, if self-serving, book, with entertaining vignettes about Sonny Liston (whose sparring partner actually was Foneda Cox, not "Fozedo"), actor Oliver Reed, actresses Diana Dors and Diana Rigg, and singer Eric Burdon. Walker also settles a score with the late boxing writer Peter Wilson for being critical of him, and suggests that world light heavyweight champion Freddie Mills was, as they say, light in the loafers.

There's not much here in the way of regret. "Why spend one moment stressed or unhappy when you can have fun?" says the Golden Boy. "Who knows if the booze did me any harm, stopped me from winning a title? What I do know is that it certainly helped me enjoy life."

Prosit! Now let's have brother George's side of the story.

—Pete Ehrmann

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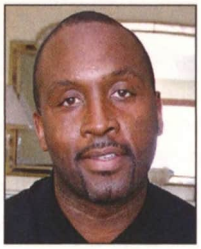
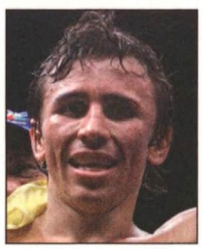
Outside the Ropes

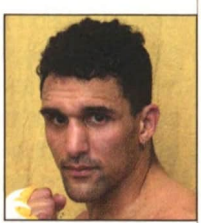


Benn: Selling memorabilia

Former WBC super middleweight titleholder **Nigel Benn**, 43, has decided to auction off his boxing memorabilia, including his championship belts. "He wants to donate most of the proceeds to Christian charities he's working with in Spain," said **Kevin Lueshing**, Benn's agent. "He is not ashamed of what he accomplished in the boxing ring. He's just concentrating more on other things." Lueshing dismissed suggestions Benn was selling his belts to raise cash for himself. "Nigel's definitely not doing it for personal financial reasons. The guy is a millionaire several times over. He owns at least 10 properties in England and seven in Spain" ... **Joe Frazier**, **Emile Griffith**, and **Carlos Ortiz** were among the many famous fighters on hand when they threw a retirement party at Madison Square Garden for the boxing ring that had been used there for 82 years. The ring, first used for the **Jack Delaney-Paul Berlenback** light heavyweight title fight in 1925, was donated to the International Boxing Hall of Fame, where it will be permanently installed ... The acting career of heavyweight **Lou Savarese** continues to gain momentum. "Big Lou" has landed a recurring role in the TV series *Damages* on FX. He plays the part of "Derek," the bodyguard and chauffer of series star **Ted Danson** ... An August 18 fight card in Columbus, Ohio, had to be postponed when two corners of the ring collapsed during the first round of a heavyweight match between **Ryan Thompson** and **Colin Baumgarner** ... Former heavyweight champion **Vitali Klitschko** underwent emergency spinal disc surgery in Innsbruck, Austria, in early-September, which prompted the postponement of his scheduled comeback fight against **Jameel McCline** on September 22 ... Undefeated junior lightweight **Edwin Valero**, 25, was cut on the face outside of a Merida, Venezuela, nightclub ... Legendary Southern California cutman **Chuck Bodak**, 91, suffered a stroke in August ... Charges of domestic assault and disorderly conduct against **Vinny Paz** were dropped when his accuser, **Ashley Spencer**, failed to appear in Warwick (Rhode Island) District Court ... Police in the Philippines are looking for **Rustico Torrecampo**, 30, who knocked out **Manny Pacquiao** in 1996 in Pacquiao's 12th professional fight. Torrecampo is being sought in connection with the murder of truck driver **Ernesto Ongkit** in the Tondo district of Manila. Investigators say that Ongkit accidentally sideswiped Torrecampo's noodle-venting cart, spilling his wares on to the street. This angered the ex-fighter, who allegedly stabbed the victim repeatedly and then fled ... According to the *Chicago Sun-Time*, heavyweight **Andrew Golota** has been sued by **Juliet Mendez**, who claims that the fighter went through a stop sign and slammed into her vehicle in April 2007. It is not the first time Golota has been sued for causing an accident. The *Sun-Times* cited court records that showed he had settled a civil suit in 2003 by paying $500,000, and a 1999 case for $60,000 ... Super middleweight **Scott Pemberton**, 40, has been charged with conspiracy to distribute drugs following a narcotics sweep by police in New Bedford, Massachusetts. According to court records, undercover agents witnessed a drug deal between Pemberton and **Stanley P. Lemos**, who was also among the almost two-dozen suspects arrested. Pemberton, 29-5-1 (24), had not fought since **Peter Manfredo Jr.** knocked him out on February 13, 2006 ... Female super featherweight **Cindy "Checkmate" Serrano**, 25, was among two-dozen people arrested on suspicion of selling steroids and other drugs in a New York City sting. The arrests followed an 18-month investigation dubbed "Operation Dumbbell" that focused on two gyms in Queens. Serrano, 15-1-1 (7), last fought on July 7, 2007, when she lost an eight-round decision to **Melissa Fiorentino** in Troy, New York ... **Anna May Goossen**, the mother of eight sons and two daughters, many of whom are involved in the boxing business, died on September 10 at the age of 86. "She loved boxing and loved going to boxing after-parties," said her son **Dan Goossen**, president of Goossen-Tutor Promotions. "Like all Irish women, she loved a good fight" ... **Steve de Villiers**, 84, one of South Africa's earliest radio boxing broadcasters and director of the South African Broadcasting Corporation, died in August after a lengthy illness. Among the famous fights de Villiers worked were **Vic Toweel**'s 1950 victory over **Manuel Ortiz** to win the world bantamweight championship and **Arnold Taylor**'s kayo of **Romero Anaya** to capture the WBA bantamweight title in 1973.



Valero: Slashed by knife



Pemberton: Busted on drug charges

Quotable

"I definitely wouldn't be thinking about trying to do that. They worked me harder than boxing. Dancing is a good workout, but it's stressful on your mind to learn different dances."

*—Former **Dancing With The Stars** contestant Evander Holyfield, commenting on Floyd Mayweather's decision to compete on the popular TV show while training for his fight with Ricky Hatton*

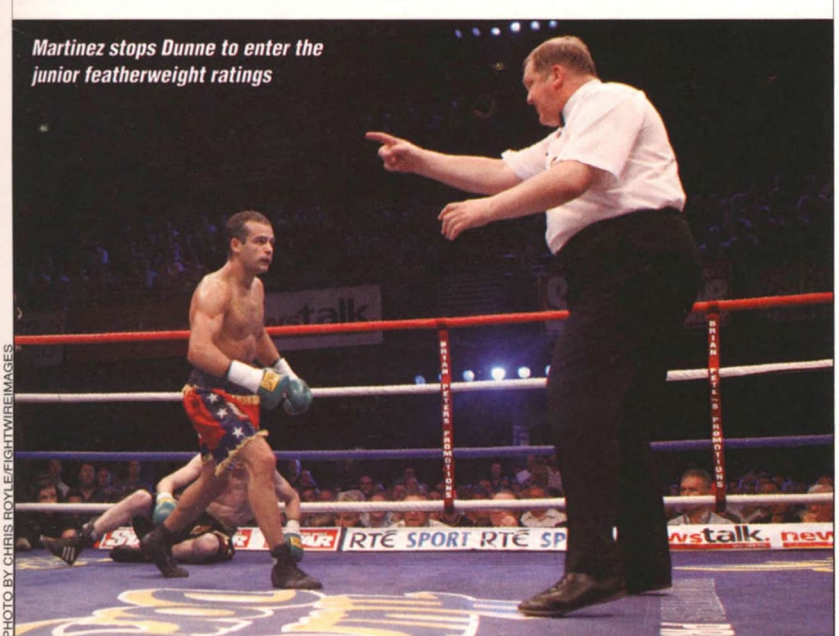
"If nothing else, boxing, for all its many ills, has proved time and again that it's as hard to kill as the cockroach population in New York City."

*—**Nevada Appeal** sportswriter Mike Houser, writing about boxing's current rivalry with mixed martial arts*

[Ratings Analysis]

For Period Ended September 16, 2007

Heavyweights: No changes.
Cruiserweights: No changes.
Light Heavyweights: No changes.
Super Middleweights: No changes.
Middleweights: Sam Soliman (ninth last issue) exits to campaign at super middleweight, replaced by Mariano Carrera at nine. Howard Eastman re-enters the rankings at 10, supplanting Sergio Mora, who departs due to inactivity.
Junior Middleweights: No changes.
Welterweights: No changes.
Junior Welterweights: Vivian Harris (second last issue) drops to four after losing by seventh-round stoppage to Junior Witter. Paul Malignaggi (third last issue) and Gavin Rees (fourth last issue) each move up one place. Ricardo Torres debuts at 10, replacing Kendall Holt, who lost via controversial TKO to Torres.
Lightweights: No changes.
Junior Lightweights: Humberto Soto (seventh last issue) switches places with Jorge Barrios (sixth last issue) due to greater activity.
Featherweights: No changes.
Junior Featherweights: Kiko Martinez debuts at nine, after stopping Bernard Dunne (ninth last issue) in one round. Dunne departs.
Bantamweights: No changes.
Junior Bantamweights: No changes.
Flyweights: No changes.
Junior Flyweights: Ivan Calderon becomes world champion, having decisioned previous champion Hugo Cazares, who drops to two. Omar Nino (third last issue) drops to five, due to inactivity. Nino is quickly approaching a year since he last fought. Everyone from five to nine slides down a slot, due to Calderon's victory. Munetsugu Kayo (10th last issue) exits due to the reshuffling.
Strawweights: Ivan Calderon's departure to junior flyweight moves everyone up one slot, making room for Omar Soto to enter sat 10.
Pound-For-Pound: No changes.



Martinez stops Dunne to enter the junior featherweight ratings

PHOTO BY CHRIS ROYLE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

The RING
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Pound-For-Pound

1. **Floyd Mayweather**
   Welterweight
2. **Manny Pacquiao**
   Junior Lightweight
3. **Juan Manuel Marquez**
   Junior Lightweight
4. **Bernard Hopkins**
   Light Heavyweight
5. **Israel Vazquez**
   Junior Featherweight
6. **Winky Wright**
   Middleweight
7. **Rafael Marquez**
   Junior Featherweight
8. **Joe Calzaghe**
   Super Middleweight
9. **Ricky Hatton**
   Junior Welterweight
10. **Miguel Cotto**
    Welterweight

For weekly updated Ring ratings, go to **TheRing-online.com**

The Ring Ratings

For Period Ended September 16, 2007

How Our Ratings Are Compiled

Fighters recognized as champions by The Ring are rated at the top of their division, with the top 10 contenders listed below.

Championship vacancies can be filled by winning a box-off between The Ring's number-one and number-two contenders, or, in certain instances, a box-off between our number-one and number-three contenders.

The only three occasions when a fighter will lose his championship status are when he retires, moves to another weight division, or is defeated in a championship bout.

The Ring Ratings are compiled by the magazine's editorial board, with the participation of The Ring Ratings Panel of boxing journalists from around the world. To see the complete list of our panelists, click on "Ratings" at thering-online.com

PHOTO BY CHRIS ROYLE/FIGHTWIREIMAGES

Kiko Martinez debuts at nine in the junior featherweight ratings

Heavyweights

Weight Unlimited

Champ: Vacant

1. **WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO** Ukraine 49-3 (44)
2. **SAMUEL PETER** Las Vegas, NV 28-1 (22)
3. **OLEG MASKAEV** Staten Island, NY 34-5 (26)
4. **RUSLAN CHAGAEV** Uzbekistan 23-0-1 (17)
5. **NICOLAY VALUEV** Russia 46-1 (34)
6. **SULTAN IBRAGIMOV** Russia 21-0-1 (17)
7. **SERGEI LIAKHOVICH** Belarus, 23-2 (14)
8. **CHRIS BYRD** Las Vegas, NV 40-3-1 (21)
9. **VLADIMIR VIRCHIS** Ukraine 23-1 (19)
10. **TONY THOMPSON** Washington, D.C. 30-1 (18)

Jr. Middleweights

Weight Limit: 154 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **CORY SPINKS** St. Louis, MO 36-4 (11)
2. **ROMAN KARMAZIN** Russia 35-2-1 (22)
3. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA** Los Angeles, CA 38-5 (30)
4. **VERNON FORREST** Atlanta, GA 39-2 (28)
5. **SERGEI DZINZIRUK** Germany 34-0 (22)
6. **KASSIM OUMA** W. Palm Beach, FL 25-3-1 (15)
7. **JOACHIM ALCINE** Canada 29-0 (18)
8. **TRAVIS SIMMS** Norwalk, CT 25-1 (19)
9. **IKE QUARTEY** Ghana 37-4-1 (31)
10. **VERNO PHILLIPS** Aurora, CO 41-10-1 (21)

Featherweights

Weight Limit: 126 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **CHRIS JOHN** Indonesia 40-0-1 (21)
2. **INJIN CHI** South Korea 31-3-1 (18)
3. **ROBERT GUERRERO** Gilroy, CA 20-1-1 (13)
4. **HIROYUKI ENOKI** Japan 27-0-1 (19)
5. **JORGE SOLIS** Mexico 32-1-2 (23)
6. **NAOKI MATSUDA** Japan 27-7-3 (10)
7. **MARTIN HONORIO** Mexico 24-3-1 (12)
8. **STEVEN LUEVANO** La Puente, CA 33-1 (15)
9. **JORGE LINARES** Venezuela 24-0 (15)
10. **NICKY COOK** England 27-1(15)

Jr. Featherweights

Weight Limit: 122 pounds

Champ: ISRAEL VAZQUEZ Mexico 42-4 (31)

1. **RAFAEL MARQUEZ** Mexico 37-4 (33)
2. **CELESTINO CABALLERO** Panama 27-2 (18)
3. **DANIEL PONCE DE LEON** Mexico 32-1 (29)
4. **SOMSAK SITHCHATCHAWAL** Thailand 53-2-1 (43)
5. **STEVE MOLITOR** Canada 24-0 (10)
6. **SERGIO MANUEL MEDINA** Argentina 29-1 (17)
7. **TAKALANI NDLOVU** South Africa 27-4 (17)
8. **POONSAWAT KRATINGAENGGYM** Thailand 30-1 (20)
9. **KIKO MARTINEZ** Spain.17-0 (14)
10. **REY BAUTISTA** Philippines 23-1(18)

Bantamweights

Weight Limit: 118 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **HOZUMI HASEGAWA** Japan 22-2 (7)
2. **VEERAPOL SAHAPROM** Thailand 58-3-2 (42)
3. **WLADIMIR SIDORENKO** Ukraine 20-0-2 (7)
4. **SILENCE MABUZA** South Africa 20-2 (16)
5. **GERRY PENALOSA** Philippines 52-6-2 (35)
6. **JHONNY GONZALEZ** Mexico 34-6 (29)
7. **RICARDO CORDOBA** Panama 30-1-2 (19)
8. **LUIS PEREZ** Nicaragua 25-1 (16)
9. **SIMONE MALUDROTTU** Italy 25-1 (10)
10. **GENARO GARCIA** Mexico 35-6 (20)

Cruiserweights

Weight Limit: 200 pounds

Champ: JEAN-MARC MORMECK
France 33-3 (22)

1. **O'NEIL BELL**
Atlanta, GA 26-2-1 (24)
2. **STEVE CUNNINGHAM**
Philadelphia, PA 20-1 (10)
3. **KRZYSZTOF WLODARCZYK**
Poland 37-2 (27)
4. **DAVID HAYE**
England 19-1 (18)
5. **ENZO MACCARINELLI**
Wales 27-1 (20)
6. **FIRAT ARSLAN**
Germany 27-3-1 (18)
7. **MARCO HUCK**
Germany 19-0 (13)
8. **VADIM TOKAREV**
Russia 23-1-1 (16)
9. **DARNELL WILSON**
Tacoma Park, MD 22-5-3 (19)
10. **JOHNATHON BANKS**
Detroit, MI 17-0 (13)

Light Heavyweights

Weight Limit: 175 pounds

Champ: BERNARD HOPKINS
Philadelphia, PA 48-4-1 (32)

1. **ZSOLT ERDEI**
Hungary 27-0 (17)
2. **ANTONIO TARVER**
Orlando, FL 25-4 (18)
3. **CLINTON WOODS**
England 40-3-1 (24)
4. **GLEN JOHNSON**
Miami, FL 46-11-2 (31)
5. **CHAD DAWSON**
New Haven, CT 24-0 (16)
6. **PAUL BRIGGS**
Australia 26-3 (18)
7. **JULIO GONZALEZ**
Huntington Beach, CA 41-3 (25)
8. **HUGO GARAY**
Argentina 29-2 (16)
9. **ADRIAN DIACONU**
Canada 24-0 (15)
10. **STIPE DREWS**
Croatia 32-1 (13)

Super Middleweights

Weight Limit: 168 pounds

Champ: JOE CALZAGHE
Wales 43-0 (32)

1. **MIKKEL KESSLER**
Denmark 39-0 (29)
2. **ANTHONY MUNDINE**
Australia 29-3 (22)
3. **JEFF LACY**
St. Petersburg, FL 22-1 (17)
4. **LUCIAN BUTE**
Canada 20-0 (16)
5. **MARKUS BEYER**
Germany 34-3-1 (13)
6. **LIBRADO ANDRADE**
Mexico 25-1 (19)
7. **CARL FROCH**
England 21-0 (17)
8. **ALLAN GREEN**
Tulsa, OK 24-1 (17)
9. **DENIS INKIN**
Germany 31-0 (24)
10. **SAKIO BIKA**
Australia 22-3-2 (14)

Middleweights

Weight Limit: 160 pounds

Champ: JERMAIN TAYLOR
Little Rock, AR 27-0-1 (17)

1. **WINKY WRIGHT**
St. Petersburg, FL 51-4-1 (25)
2. **ARTHUR ABRAHAM**
Germany 24-0 (19)
3. **KELLY PAVLIK**
Youngstown, OH 31-0 (28)
4. **EDISON MIRANDA**
Colombia 28-2 (24)
5. **FELIX STURM**
Germany 28-2 (12)
6. **JAVIER CASTILLEJO**
Spain 61-7 (41)
7. **SEBASTIAN SYLVESTER**
Germany 26-2 (12)
8. **AMIN ASIKAINEN**
Finland 20-1 (14)
9. **MARIANO CARRERA**
Argentina 31-4 (22)
10. **HOWARD EASTMAN**
England 42-4 (35)

Welterweights

Weight Limit: 147 pounds

Champ: FLOYD MAYWEATHER
Grand Rapids, MI 38-0 (24)

1. **MIGUEL COTTO**
Puerto Rico 30-0 (25)
2. **PAUL WILLIAMS**
Augusta, GA 33-0 (24)
3. **SHANE MOSLEY**
Pomona, CA 44-4 (37)
4. **ANTONIO MARGARITO**
Mexico 34-5 (24)
5. **ZAB JUDAH**
Brooklyn, NY 35-5 (25)
6. **KERMIT CINTRON**
Reading, PA 28-1 (26)
7. **LUIS COLLAZO**
Queens, NY 27-3 (13)
8. **JOSHUA CLOTTEY**
Bronx, NY 32-2 (19)
9. **OKTAY URKAL**
Germany 38-4 (12)
10. **JACKSON BONSU**
Belgium 25-1 (22)

Jr. Welterweights

Weight Limit: 140 pounds

Champ: RICKY HATTON
England 43-0 (31)

1. **JUNIOR WITTER**
England 36-1-2 (21)
2. **PAUL MALIGNAGGI**
Brooklyn, NY 23-1 (5)
3. **GAVIN REES**
Wales 27-0 (13)
4. **VIVIAN HARRIS**
Brooklyn, NY 28-3-1 (18)
5. **SOULEYMANE M'BAYE**
France 35-2-1 (20)
6. **JOSE LUIS CASTILLO**
Mexico 55-8-1 (47)
7. **LOVEMORE NDOU**
Australia 45-9-1 (30)
8. **JUAN LAZCANO**
El Paso, TX 37-4-1 (27)
9. **DEMETRIUS HOPKINS**
Philadelphia, PA 27-0-1 (11)
10. **RICARDO TORRES**
Colombia, 32-1 (28)

Lightweights

Weight Limit: 135 pounds

Champ: JOEL CASAMAYOR
Miami, FL 34-3-1 (21)

1. **JUAN DIAZ**
Houston, TX 32-0 (16)
2. **JULIO DIAZ**
Coachella, CA 34-3 (25)
3. **DAVID DIAZ**
Chicago, IL 33-1-1 (17)
4. **NATE CAMPBELL**
Jacksonville, FL 31-5-1 (25)
5. **MICHAEL KATSIDIS**
Australia 23-0 (20)
6. **ALMAZBEK RAIYMKULOV**
Las Vegas, NV 25-1-1 (14)
7. **ZAHIR RAHEEM**
Las Vegas, NV 28-2 (16)
8. **JOSE SANTA CRUZ**
Mexico 25-2 (14)
9. **YURI ROMANOV**
Belarus 19-2 (13)
10. **ANTHONY PETERSON**
Washington, DC 24-0 (17)

Jr. Lightweights

Weight Limit: 130 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **MANNY PACQUIAO**
Philippines 44-3-2 (35)
2. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ**
Mexico 47-3-1 (35)
3. **MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA**
Mexico 63-5 (42)
4. **JOAN GUZMAN**
Dominican Republic 27-0 (17)
5. **EDWIN VALERO**
Venezuela 22-0 (22)
6. **HUMBERTO SOTO**
Mexico 43-5-2 (27)
7. **JORGE BARRIOS**
Argentina 47-3-1 (34)
8. **VICENTE MOSQUERA**
Panama 24-2-1 (12)
9. **ALEX ARTHUR**
Scotland 25-1 (19)
10. **YODSANAN NANTHACHAI**
Thailand 50-3-1 (39)

Jr. Bantamweights

Weight Limit: 115 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **MARTIN CASTILLO**
Mexico 32-2 (17)
2. **ALEXANDER MUNOZ**
Venezuela 30-2 (27)
3. **NOBUO NASHIRO**
Japan 9-1 (5)
4. **CRISTIAN MIJARES**
Mexico 32-3-2 (13)
5. **FERNANDO MONTIEL**
Mexico 34-2-1 (25)
6. **JORGE ARCE**
Mexico 47-4-1 (36)
7. **KATSUSHIGE KAWASHIMA**
Japan 32-6 (21)
8. **JOSE NAVARRO**
Los Angeles, CA 26-2 (12)
9. **Z GORRES**
Philippines 27-2-1 (15)
10. **PRAMUANSAK POSUWAN**
Thailand 39-1-1 (22)

Flyweights

Weight Limit: 112 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **NONITO DONAIRE**
San Leandro, CA 18-1 (11)
2. **DAISUKE NAITO**
Japan 31-2-2 (20)
3. **PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM**
Thailand 65-3 (34)
4. **TAKEFUMI SAKATA**
Japan 31-4-1 (15)
5. **OMAR NARVAEZ**
Argentina 25-0-2 (16)
6. **VIC DARCHINYAN**
Australia 28-1(22)
7. **ROBERTO VASQUEZ**
Panama 24-2 (17)
8. **BRAHIM ASLOUM**
France 22-2 (9)
9. **JOSE LOPEZ**
Puerto Rico 35-7-2 (29)
10. **KOKI KAMEDA**
Japan 16-0 (11)

Jr. Flyweights

Weight Limit: 108 pounds

Champ: IVAN CALDERON
Puerto Rico 29-0 (6)

1. **ULISES SOLIS**
Mexico 25-1-2 (19)
2. **HUGO CAZARES**
Mexico 25-4-1 (19)
3. **GIOVANNI SEGURA**
Bell Gardens, CA 18-0-1 (14)
4. **EDGAR SOSA**
Mexico 29-5 (15)
5. **OMAR NINO**
Mexico 24-2-1 (10)
6. **DANIEL REYES**
Colombia 39-5-1 (30)
7. **NELSON DIEPPA**
Puerto Rico 24-4-2 (13)
8. **BRIAN VILORIA**
Waipahu, HI 19-2 (12)
9. **OMAR SALADO**
Mexico 17-0-2 (9)
10. **JOSE AGUIRRE**
Mexico 34-6-1 (20)

Strawweights

Weight Limit: 105 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **YUTAKA NIDA**
Japan 22-1-3 (8)
2. **FLORANTE CONDES**
Philippines 22-3-1 (20)
3. **EAGLE KYOWA**
Japan 18-1 (6)
4. **MUHAMMAD RACHMAN**
Indonesia 61-6-5 (31)
5. **KATSUNARI TAKAYAMA**
Japan 18-3 (7)
6. **ERIBERTO GEJON**
Philippines 23-2-1 (13)
7. **PORNSAWAN KRATINGDAENGGYM**
Thailand 20-0 (15)
8. **OLEYDONG SITHSAMERCHAI**
Thailand 23-0 (8)
9. **RODEL MAYOL**
Philippines 23-2 (18)
10. **OMAR SOTO**
Puerto Rico 12-1-1 (6)

By Jeff Ryan

Resurrected, But Neglected

One of my favorite flicks of the year is *Resurrecting The Champ*, starring Samuel L. Jackson, as a homeless Denver man who claims to be former heavyweight contender Bob Satterfield, and Josh Hartnett as the journalist who chronicles his story. But although respected critics like Jeffrey Lyons ("a poignant, wonderfully acted story") and Michael Medved ("Jackson deserves an Oscar nomination") had great things to say about the film, it has in many ways been treated like the movie version of a walkout bout.

With no advanced screening available, how silly of me to wait a whole week after its release date to attempt to see the flick in my area of New York City. By that time it had been yanked from the theater faster than a bootlegger with a camcorder set up in the fifth row. Another multiplex a few miles farther away was showing it, but just once a day. At 10:30 p.m.! Eventually, your intrepid film critic trekked about 20 miles out to Long Island, where it was playing at 7:30 p.m. on a Saturday evening—date night—to an enthusiastic crowd of about eight people.

Lacking explosions, 20-minute car chases, poop jokes, or decapitations, the film presumably doesn't appeal to today's sophisticated moviegoer. Or maybe boxing flicks struggle when they don't feature Sylvester Stallone bleeding and saying, "Yo" a lot. (Ticket sales for *Cinderella Man*, for instance, lagged despite positive reviews.) Or perhaps the public learned that the film is less about a boxer and more about a boxing *writer*.

Okay, so now you know why *Resurrecting The Champ* appealed to me so much. It's not everyday (actually, it's never) that a fight scribe's story makes it to the screen, even if it is fiction. So much of what the Hartnett character experienced rang true. We've all dug tirelessly for that standout story only to

PHOTO COURTESY YARI FILM GROUP

***Josh Hartnett and Samuel L. Jackson in a scene from* Resurrecting The Champ**

The real Bob Satterfield

have it sometimes fall right into our laps. Blood has splattered on my notes at ringside too. My face has lit up like Hartnett's at the realization that the interview subject has just uttered a screaming headline of a quote. And, yes, as the movie made quite clear, boxing is unquestionably the hardest of sports to fact-check unless the publication's staff is immersed in the fight game full-time. My conversations with fact-checkers at *Sport* magazine about the alphabet-title confusion were often akin to speaking Cantonese to a group of Martians.

"A writer, like a boxer, must stand alone," the narrator says in the film's opening moments. It's a reality that's never been lost on me. One byline goes on a story, and if the writer blows it, he, more than anyone, looks stupid. The relationship between fighter and writer in the film was not unlike many of my experiences through the years. Trust with a story subject is sometimes established at painfully slow speed, you inevitably have to believe that those unverifiable things you're being told are true, and there is often a bond established that simply doesn't exist between writers and athletes in team sports.

There are a few minor complaints with *Resurrecting The Champ*, particularly a couple of scenes that were about as realistic as Jon Bon Jovi's teeth. At one point, Hartnett's character impresses the brass at Showtime with a postfight interview he conducts during an on-air tryout, even though he delivers a message to his son over the airwaves and lets the

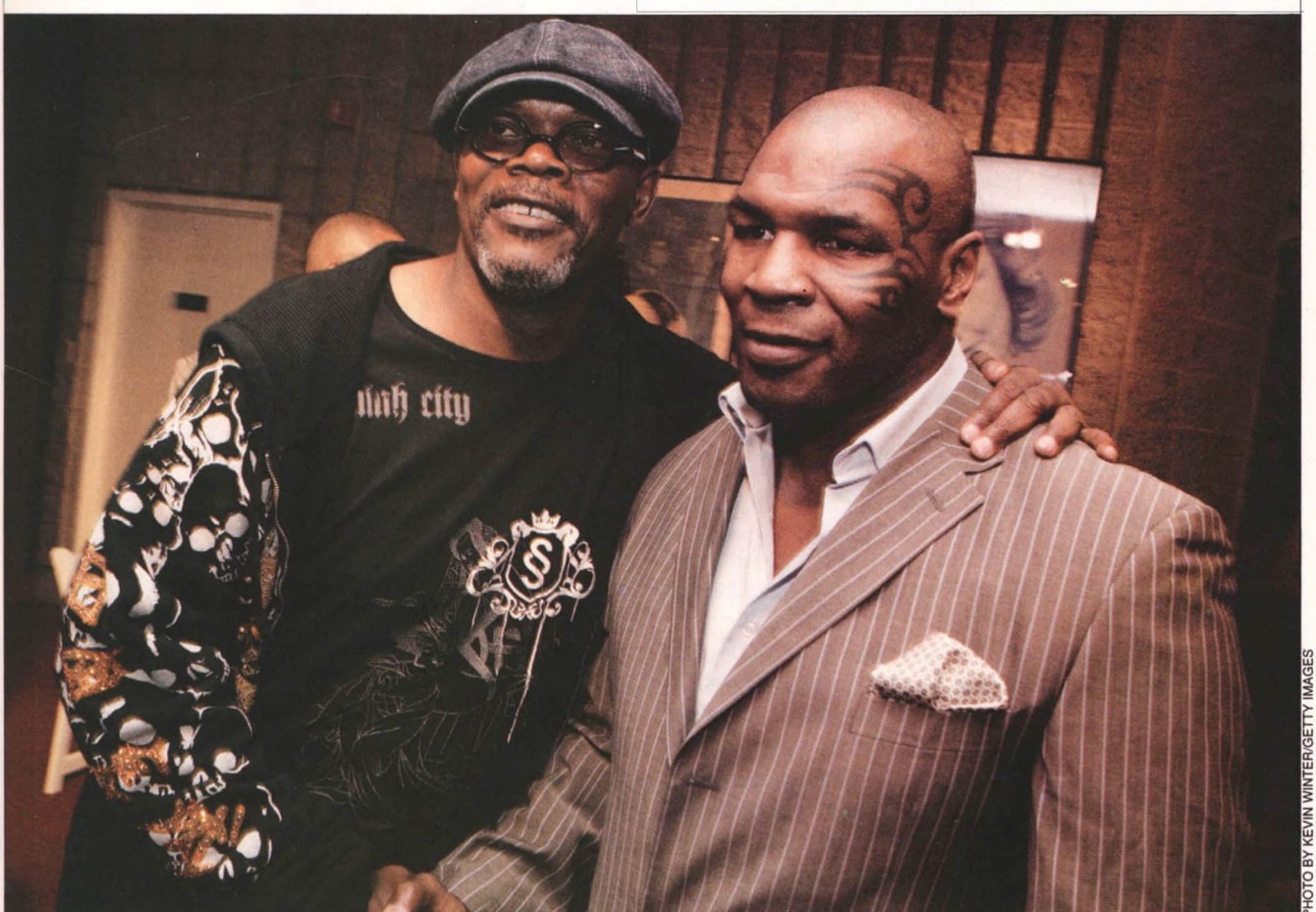


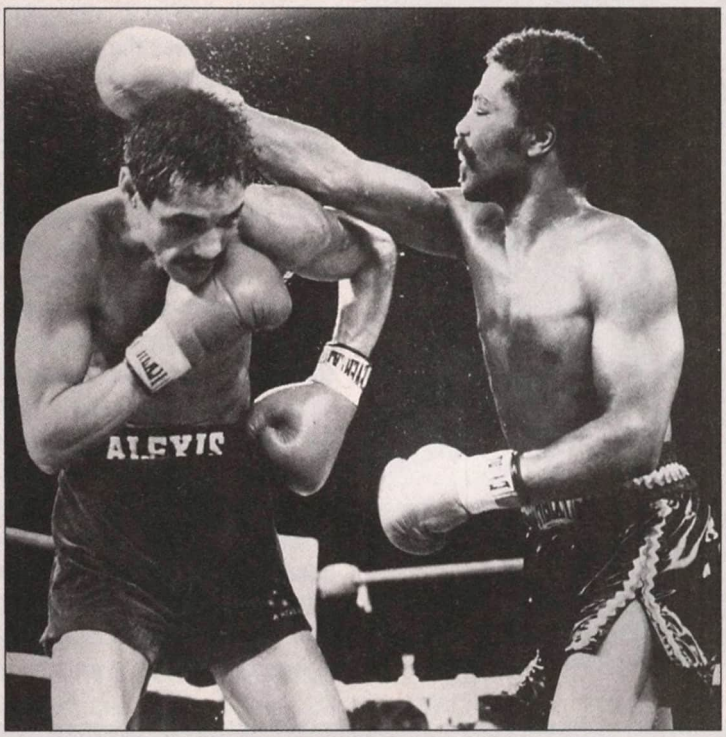
PHOTO BY KEVIN WINTER/GETTY IMAGES

***Jackson and Mike Tyson at the premiere of* Resurrecting The Champ**

Personal Perceptions:

The last word on everything from an Orange Bowl to chins made of fine china:

•The decision of the University of Miami to move its football games out of the rickety Orange Bowl after the 2007 season virtually guarantees that the 70-year-old stadium will be razed in the near future. Though hardly a legendary boxing venue, the ballpark did host a legendary battle: Aaron Pryor-Alexis Arguello I in 1982. If there's a plaque or monument erected on the site after the demolition, here's hoping that it's not just the stadium's Super Bowls and college football classics that get a mention.



Arguello and Pryor create a classic at the Orange Bowl

•Earlier this year, tennis stars Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer played a match on a court that was half-grass (Federer's favorite surface) and half-clay (Nadal's preference.) Here's an idea: Stage the Mayweather-Hatton bout in a ring that's equal parts rock hard and mushier than an old mattress.

•It's one thing to stoke our anticipatory fires by previewing a big fight, but Showtime should have saved the money it spent on *Vargas vs. Mayorga: Countdown To The Brawl.* Whose idea was it to film a documentary on two shot fighters? It should have been called, *Countdown To Slurring Their Words.*

•Scoring a title-winning knockout as blood poured from gashes over both eyes, junior featherweight Israel Vazquez reminded me of Matthew Saad Muhammad (then Franklin) peering through the blood and flattening Marvin Johnson to win a slice of the light heavyweight crown back in the '70s.

•Roy Jones-Felix Trinidad seems headed to Madison Square Garden, one arena that refuses to believe boxing can't play the big rooms anymore.

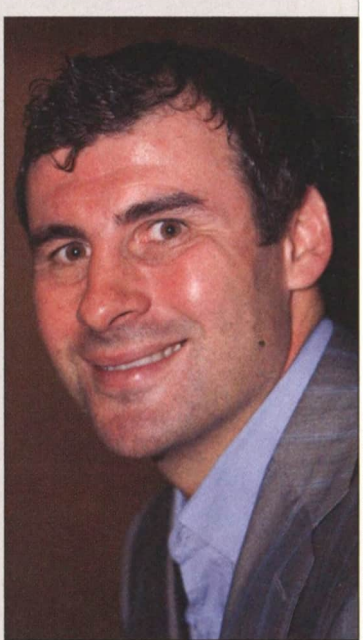
•Watching Muhammad Ali throwing punches on a TV commercial recently left me with a lump the size of a pumpkin in my throat. A spry, 76-year-old Archie Moore dancing around a hotel room and firing combinations for my amusement it wasn't. All jowly and glassy-eyed, Ali doesn't even bear much facial resemblance to the man we once called "The Greatest." Using him as a pitchman these days is pure exploitation.

•Did you notice that the woman in England who named her baby girl after 25 former heavyweight kings ("Outside The Ropes," THE RING, November 2007) had the good taste to name them after only *linear* champs? No Tubbs, Witherspoon, McCall, Ruiz, or Valuev anywhere on that birth certificate.

•So now Buster Douglas is working as an actor, *eh*? On his resume he must have listed his first acting job as that night in 1990 when he made his first heavyweight title defense, against Holyfield, and acted like he didn't care if he won or got annihilated. Maybe he'll work harder at *this* career.

•Even if it doesn't make financial sense to him, Joe Calzaghe needs to fight in the U.S. at some point. If he's worried that he can't draw in the States the way he can in Wales, he can just direct his fans to the British Airways ticket counter and ask them to join him on his journey. We've got plenty of hotel space.

•It's been a while since a deluge of letters from crackpots has poured in, so let me jab a stick into the ribs of the snoozing Doberman. Do you know when Ultimate Fighting, mixed-martial arts, and the rest of that cuckoo caged combat will get respect from me? When one of those Ultimate warriors learns how to take a punch. No matter who's facing whom, the first solid shot to the head usually takes the recipient off his feet. And when he's off his feet, and the wrestling holds start, then it really gets boring.



Would Calzaghe's fans follow him to the U.S.?

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

winning fighter wrestle the microphone from his hand. In another scene, Hartnett's editor, played by Alan Alda, tells the scribe, "I forget your pieces while I'm reading them." Even the most callous of editors wouldn't be that blunt. THE RING's editors have told me they remember my stuff for at least 10 minutes.

If a behind-the-scenes look at boxing writing doesn't interest you at all, well, you've probably already stopped reading this column. But if you want to see how this end of the fight business functions, watch one of Jackson's finest performances, and experience a boxing flick that isn't filled with one clichéd fight sequence after another, *Resurrecting The Champ* is two hours of recommended fun. (It's sure to have you combing the record books and searching the Internet for everything you can find on Satterfield.)

Rent it on DVD. Or, if it's still around, be sure to catch it at 3 a.m. at a theater not near you.

Dancing King: As we went to press, Floyd Mayweather was preparing for a prime-time competition that was expected to put his versatility, creativity, preparation, focus, and knack for impressing the judges to the test as never before. No, we're not talking about the Ricky Hatton fight, but the new season of the hit ABC show, *Dancing With The Stars*.

Though reality shows are usually about as well received in my house as furnace breakdowns and dinnertime calls from telemarketers, this is one reality show that qualifies as must-see television. It's not clear which will be more entertaining, if "Pretty Boy" treats the mainstream to some of that thug persona he was so eager to lay on us in the weeks leading up to his clash with Oscar De La Hoya, or if he pulls an Eddie Haskell and tries to come across as more cuddly and sweet than a teddy bear wearing a necklace made of Hershey's kisses.

One thing is certain: Mayweather's mere presence gives the otherwise silly show some instant credibility. Not because he's the next Fred Astairedown, but because he may be the first actual star among the "stars" who've competed. In previous seasons, the lineup included washed-up actors (the likes of John Ratzenberger, Vivica A. Fox, Ian Ziering), faded singers (Joey Fatone, Drew Lachey, Billy Ray Cyrus), retired or past-their-prime athletes (Evander Holyfield, Jerry Rice, Emmitt Smith, Apolo Anton Ohno), or people who were on top of their game but known only to a limited audience (Laila Ali).

Mayweather, on the other hand, is appearing at the height of his popularity *and* the peak of his professional skills. Can the king off the ring become the ruler of the ballroom too? (Hatton says Pretty Boy, if nothing else, can be expected to backpedal. *Ouch.*) Well, the odds are against him. Let's face it, "cutting a rug" isn't a phrase that's often used in connection with boxing. Not unless you're talking about some of the high rollers at ringside in Las Vegas having their toupees reshaped. ■

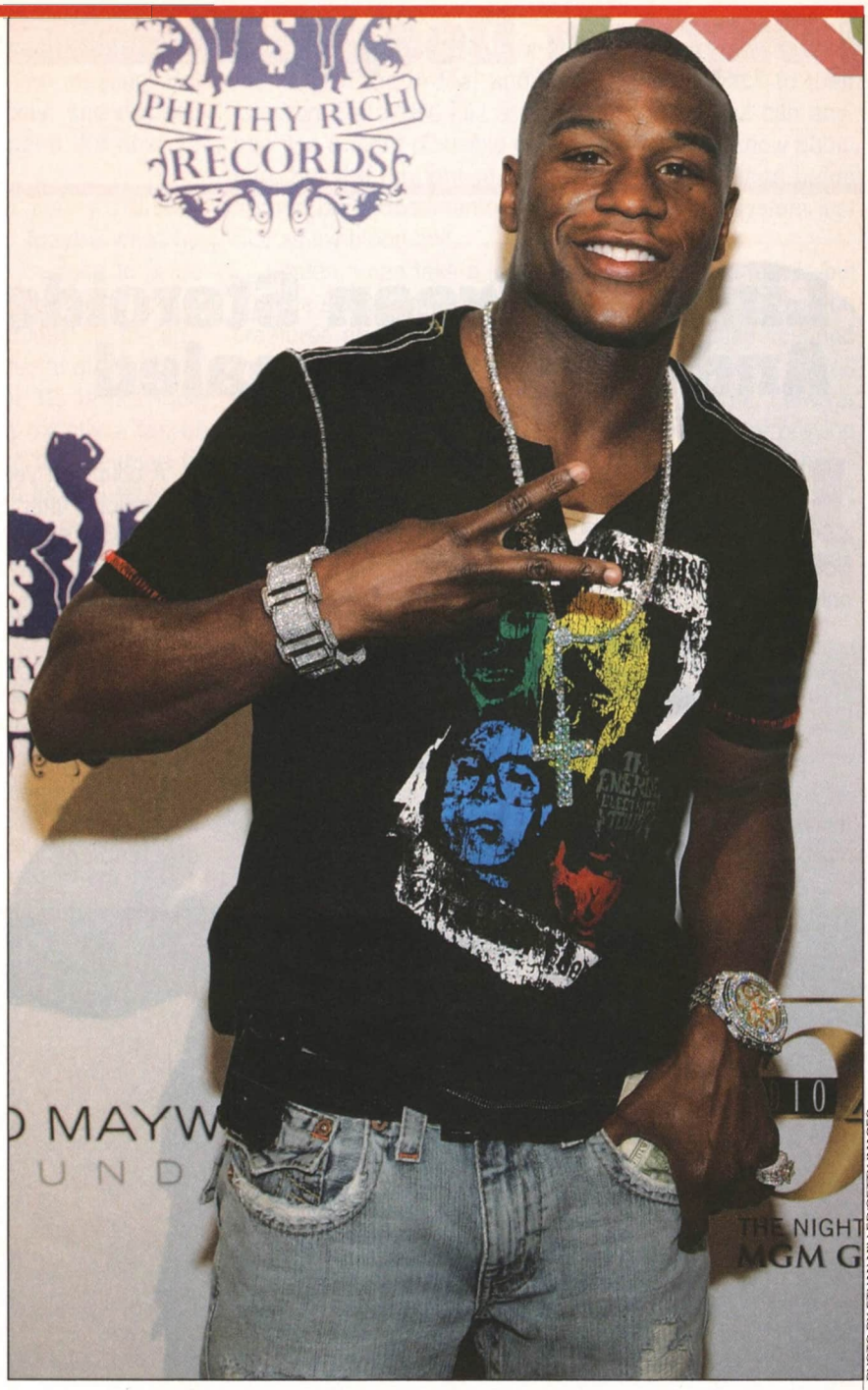


PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Is "Pretty Boy" more Ginger Rogers than Fred Astaire?

By Ivan Goldman

Link Between Steroids And UFO's Revealed

James Toney's most recent flunked test for banned steroids showed two in his system. One of them, according to the *L.A. Times,* was identified as Boldenone, a fat-reducing medication for horses prescribed only by veterinarians.

Appearing before the California commission, Toney aggressively denied everything and said he didn't know for sure what happened, but theorized that his vitamin and mineral supplements were somehow contaminated without his knowledge. "I don't need no steroids to beat anybody. I'm the best fighter in the world," Toney said. He angrily accused a commissioner of showing him disrespect. Toney's faithful promoter, Dan Goossen, also spoke in his behalf.

A couple of years earlier, when Toney tested positive for nandrolone after decisioning John Ruiz in New York, that commission took away his victory and called it a no-contest. Must have been some ghastly residue from post-surgery medication, Toney and Goossen said that time.

In this second incident, the California commission showed mercy, voting 6-1 to cut Toney's 12-month suspension in half while upholding a $2,500 fine. His opponent, Danny Batchelder, who'd lost by split decision in their San Jose, California, bout and who also tested positive, didn't appeal his 12 months and $2,500. Ironically, MMA fighter Hermes Franca, who tested positive for drostanolone in another California contest around the

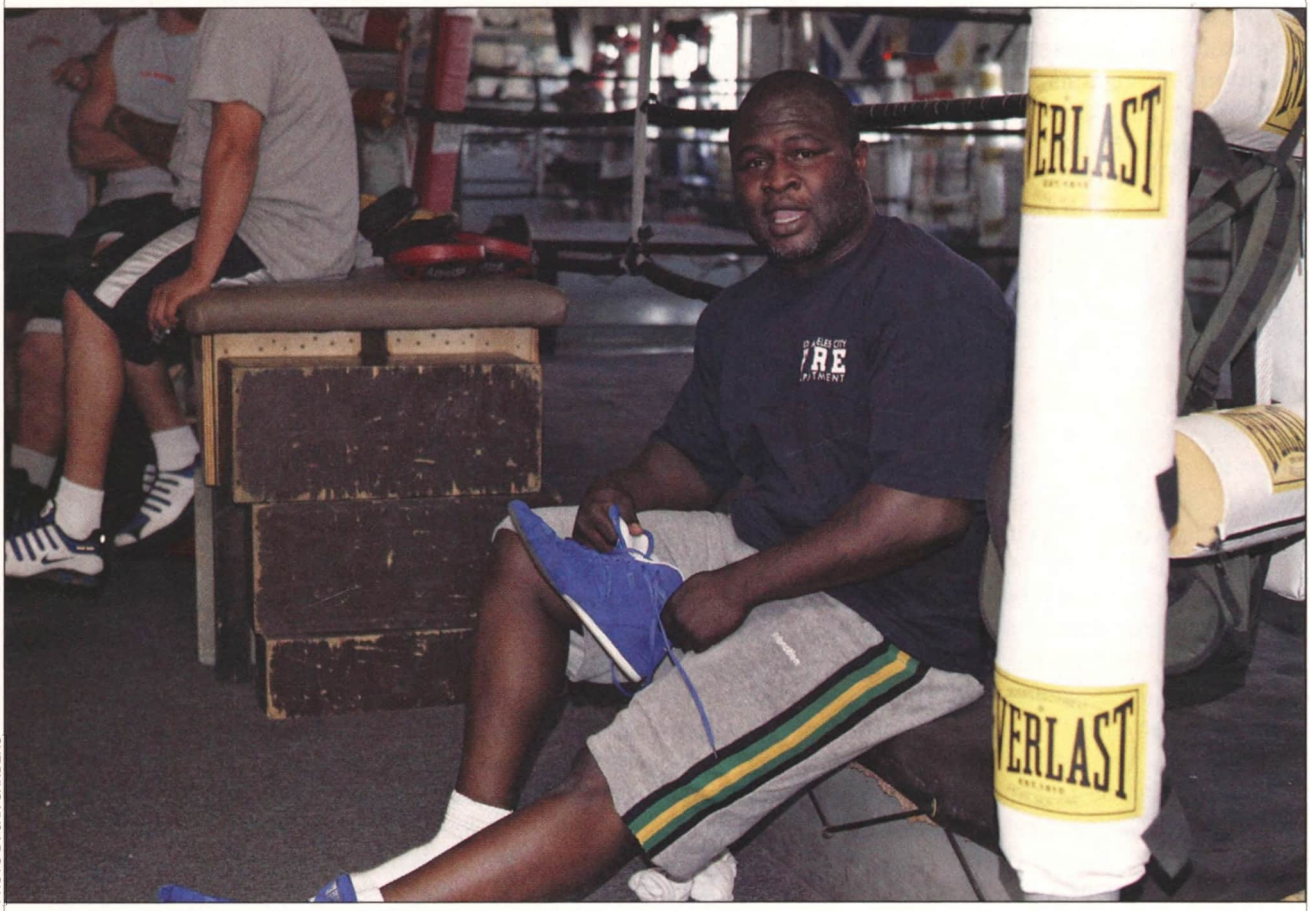


PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

Why did California commission cut Toney a break?

same time, admitted his misdeed and threw himself at the mercy of the commission at the very same meeting. But the commissioners weren't buying honesty, and decided that the apologetic Franca must still spend the next 12 months on the sidelines.

Commissioner Julio Ramirez cited Toney's distinguished record as reason for leniency. Maybe what he meant was that a one-year suspension is close to a life sentence for a 38-year-old fighter. Of course, it's hard to know for sure what he meant because, at least on the surface of things, what he said made no sense at all. A repeat offender got six months, a first offender 12. In previous columns, I've made it clear that I'm not exactly a fan of cage fighting, but there's a concept here that seemed to escape the commission: Whether you're a four-round fighter no one ever heard of or a heavyweight contender whose picture's been on the cover of this magazine, everybody's equal before the law.

Toney, Franca complained to the *Times*, "didn't prove nothing, and I come here to tell the truth, and now he's going to be fighting again in four months and I'm out for a year."

Could it be that, heck, anybody could accidentally swallow or inject horse medicine or maybe a hippo laxative once in a while? Don't all those bottles look alike? Well, let's just say that any kindhearted soul who accepts this is also apt to believe shoplifters nabbed with a pile of swag under their coats who swear they don't know how it got there.

Sports pages these days chronicle an increasing multitude of bewildered athletes who can't understand how illicit, performance-enhancing steroids got in their systems. Fernando Vargas once had the problem, along with assorted bicycle racers, baseball players, etc. Barry Bonds, in the twilight of his career, when other mortals physically deteriorate, started doubling his previous annual homerun totals and, in fact, set the all-time record at 73 when he was 38 years old. He denied any association whatsoever with outlawed chemical boosters despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary dug up by two enterprising *San Francisco Chronicle* reporters. But it seemed prudent to agree with Bonds. After all, by that time he'd bulked up to the size of a locomotive. Why tug on Superman's cape?

Evander Holyfield is another athlete who denied everything. But if he had any plausible explanation for his mysterious connection to the notorious steroid-dispensing Applied Pharmacy Services, I sure didn't hear it.

I racked my brain to find a scenario that might vindicate all these athletes picked out of the lineup by the fickle finger of scientific evidence, and you know what? There is one. What would you say if I told you pesky aliens abduct these innocent jocks, beam the selected victims into their spacecraft, and inject them full of steroids before erasing their memory of the ordeal and dropping them back to their fates on Earth? It's just a theory, of course, but can anyone find a more plausible explanation? I don't know about you, but the thought of all these poor Earthlings being framed by undocumented aliens to our solar system just makes my blood boil.

I mean, I can take a joke as well as the next fellow, but it's time somebody stood up to these despicable little green creatures and their chemical pranks. When they confined their activities to carrying off village idiots and other addled hicks on lonely country roads in the dead of night, I always figured, heck, live and let live. But now that they're preying on big-time sports, I say enough is enough, damn it. I hereby raise the curtain on outer-space jokesters. If they don't cease and desist their outrageous extraterrestrial shenanigans, I'll dig up factual proof of their whole sneaky network. Hear me, E.T.? Back off!

PHOTO BY J.C. DIAZ/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Holyfield has always denied using steroids

Donnybrooks For Dollars: The same day we learned Nevada fined Bernard Hopkins 200K for initiating a brawl at a prefight news conference with Winky Wright, Main Events sent out a news release that didn't even try to hide its ecstasy over a similar dumb scene prior to the Fernando Vargas-Ricardo Mayorga match that was later postponed to November 23. The message boasted that the two fighters "barely made it through their promoters' announcement of their upcoming match before taunting erupted into a street-fight that resulted in punches being thrown and landed—and some blood from a cut under Mayorga's right eye."

Promoters trying to profit off this crap are playing with fire. And Hopkins, when he pushed Winky's face in, was doubling as a promoter, because he's a partner in Golden Boy Promotions. The real question is whether stupid prefight tussles sell tickets. When I asked Lee Samuels of Main Events, he thought a while and said he didn't know. He said Top Rank never plans or encourages this kind of stuff and pointed out that prefight fights pose real dangers. "No one gets paid if someone gets hurt," he said. "They're on a stage, and sometimes it's a pretty good drop."

If you believe free publicity sells tickets, and most of us do, the ugly truth is that these pre-battle battles do enhance the bottom line. That's because the violence-craving news media are much more apt to show tape from a riot than from a scene in which people are conducting business like gentlemen.

But this leads to another question: Do the news media present this junk because the public likes it or does the public like it because it's been conditioned that way by bottom-feeding TV news people? Which came first? The chicken or the egg? If you figure that one out, let me know.

Fight Capital Hidalgo: "There was no support of the community. We will not come back here for a fight again." Those were the reported words of promoter Gary Shaw complaining about Hidalgo, Texas. So let's get this straight. Shaw sets up a surefire barnburner, the Israel Vazquez-Rafael Marquez rematch, in a little flyspeck of a town along the dirt-poor Tex-Mex border, and then he's shocked when he doesn't sell enough tickets? Where's he putting his next card? Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan?

Futch Award: As for the Vazquez-Marquez fight itself, critics jumped all over referee Guadalupe Garcia for stopping it, but six or seven rounds is about as long as these two can go at it without someone being carried out. Besides which, yes, Marquez was still fighting, but his punches weren't Rafael Marquez punches anymore. He was more beat up than he understood. Particularly in such a violent contest, seconds are crucial. After Showtime gave us the

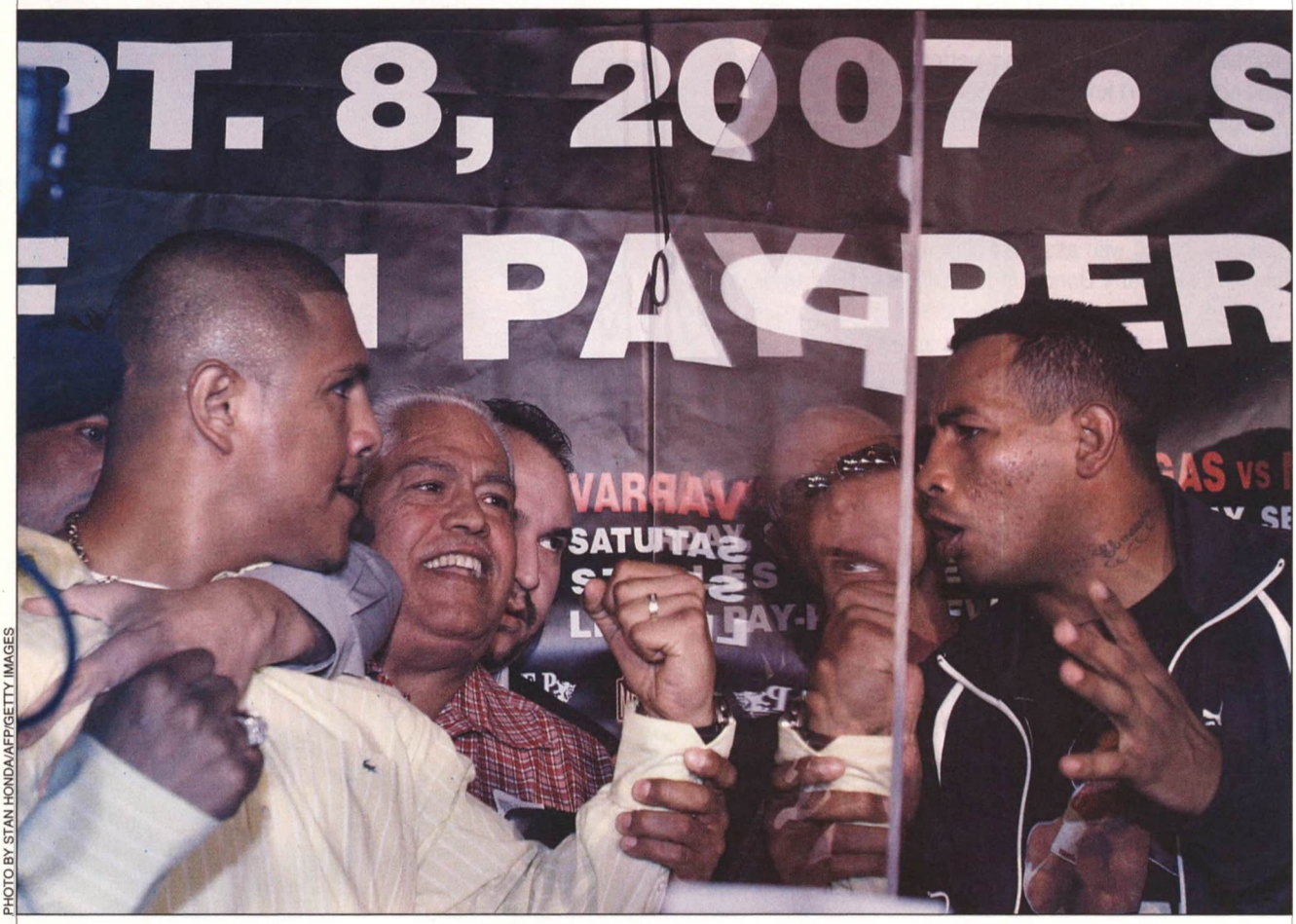


PHOTO BY STAN HONDA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Vargas and Mayorga threaten each other from behind Plexiglas barrier

PHOTO COURTESY OF SHOWTIME

Referee Guadalupe Garcia made the right call

slow-mo replay, Al Bernstein saw it as evidence of a premature stoppage. He was wrong. The tape proved split-second dexterity by referee Garcia, who earns a Futch Award for hard-ass, intelligent decision-making under fire.

Sure, Marquez complained, but thanks to Garcia, he was left with all the tools necessary to complain and to fight another day. How long their third explosion will last isn't all that hard to figure either. Follow the numbers. First one went seven, the second went 5½. But it's even easier to forecast a winner. The fans.

East vs. West: Miguel Cotto vs. Shane Mosley in Madison Square Garden November 10 is the best East Coast-West Coast match anyone has put together since I can't remember when. Oscar De La Hoya-Bernard Hopkins was big, all right, but no remake of Bambi vs. Godzilla can qualify as a serious bi-coastal battle. Cotto-Mosley is the real thing. Cotto's residence in Puerto Rico is an insignificant detail. He's got more New York fans than any New York fighter out there.

Floyd Mayweather vs. Ricky Hatton the following month is a hot one that will no doubt pull in more dollars, and it's impossible to denigrate a match between two guys whose combined record is 81-0 (55), especially when their kayo victims include Titans like Diego Corrales and Kostya Tszyu. But if I had to watch only one of the two fights, I'd take the wise old scrappy West Coaster yearning to set his redemption in stone versus the East Coast star who hits like a howitzer and doesn't know how to lose. Yeah, I know. Mosley doesn't stand a chance. But he's my pick. ■

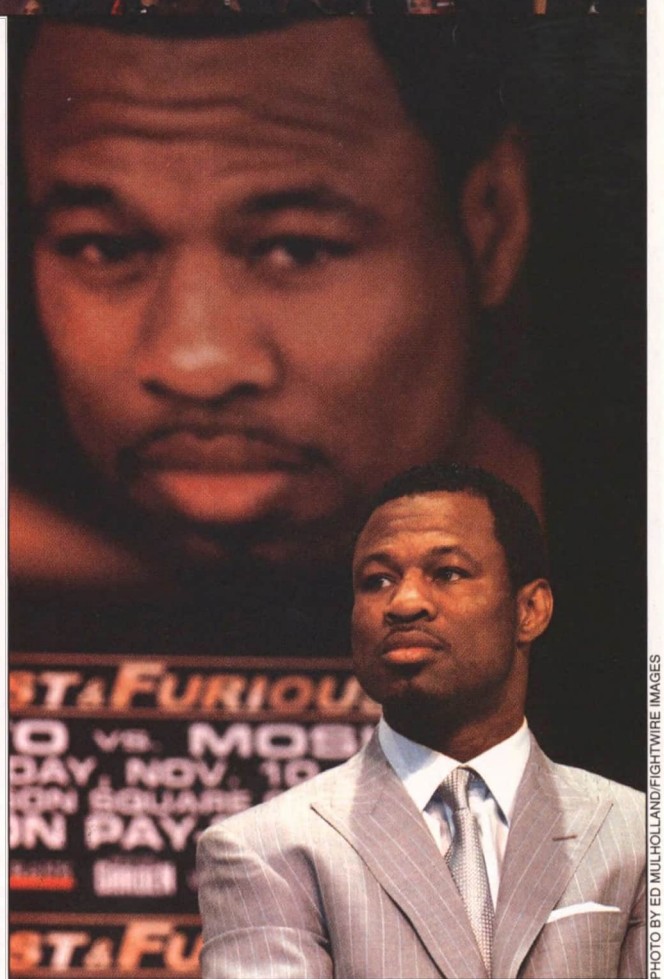


PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Goldman likes Mosley over Cotto

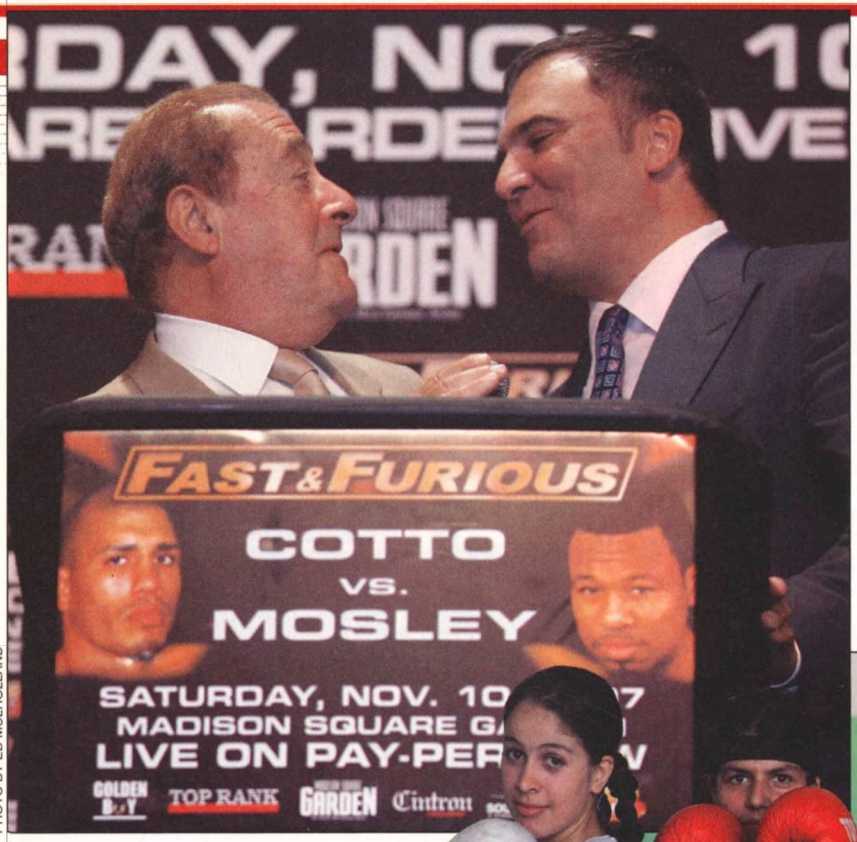


PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND

We know Top Rank's Bob Arum and Golden Boy's Richard Schaefer are getting along swimmingly these days, but we think Schaefer may be taking it a step too far by moving in for the public smooch. So that's how the Swiss operate ...

PHOTO BY PAULA BRONSTEIN/GETTY IMAGES

Are we ever going to have peace in the Middle East? Not as long as Afghanistan is training all of its young girls to be fighters. And by "all" of the young girls ... we mean all four of the ones in this photo. The first women's boxing league in Afghanistan started earlier this year, and these girls, all between the ages of 15 and 17, are taking to the sport. Too bad the second one in from the left is wearing a T-shirt that says "WBA," but hey, she's new to boxing, so we'll cut her some slack

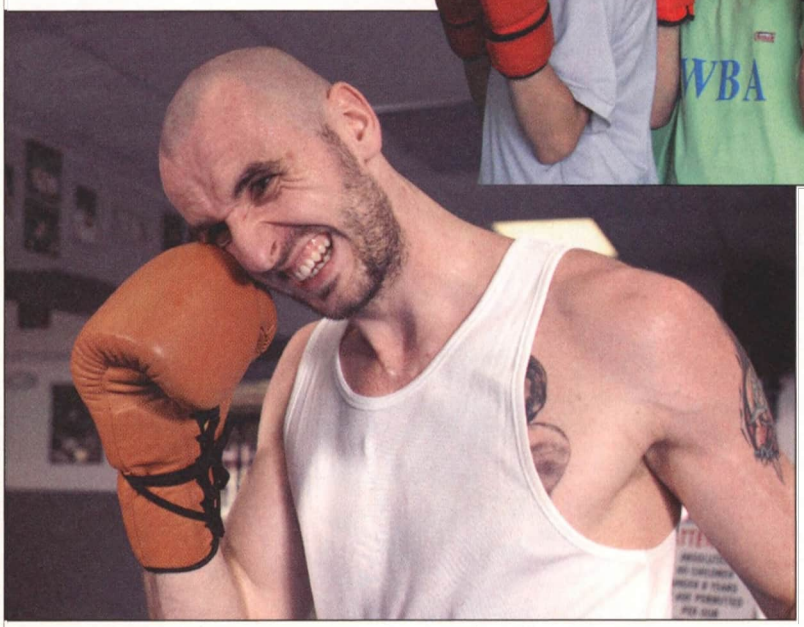


PHOTO BY FERNANDO MEDINA/NBAE VIA GETTY IMAGES

First Teddy Atlas got the New York Jets into boxing training, and now basketball player Marcin Gortat, a center for the Orlando Magic, is lacing up the gloves in the offseason. You don't see too many seven-footers step into the ring, but for Gortat, boxing is in the blood: His father, Janusz Gortat, won Olympic bronze medals for boxing in both 1972 and '76 representing Poland. (We're just excited to know there's some one in the NBA who can punch with better technique than Carmelo Anthony.)

A lot of women who put on boxing gloves look like they should be driving trucks or working construction ... but they don't all have to look like that. Here, a model tries to pull off the boxer look at a shopping mall in Hong Kong, where she's promoting a new video game called Powerboxing.

PHOTO BY BRUCE GIFFORD/FILMMAGIC/GETTY IMAGES

PHOTO BY MIKE CLARKE/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

You can't have a party called "Travis Barker's Famous Stars And Straps MAGIC Party" without inviting "The Magic Man," Paulie Malignaggi (pictured making his entrance with songwriter/record producer Jason Villaroman). The party, held at Tao night club at the Venetian in Las Vegas, was hosted by rock drummer Barker, who was married to Shanna Moakler, who has a child with Oscar De La Hoya, who twice lost to Shane Mosley, who's about to fight Miguel Cotto, who handed Malignaggi his lone defeat. Apparently six degrees of separation is just the right number to get a party invite.

That's one way to combat the paparazzi—by taking pictures of them! Making his red-carpet arrival for the L.A. premiere of the boxing film Resurrecting The Champ, *a champ in need of resurrection, Mike Tyson, snaps off a few keepers for his scrapbook. Unfortunately, the movie performed about as well at the box office as Tyson did against Kevin McBride, making an embarrassing $3-million through its first two weeks of release.*

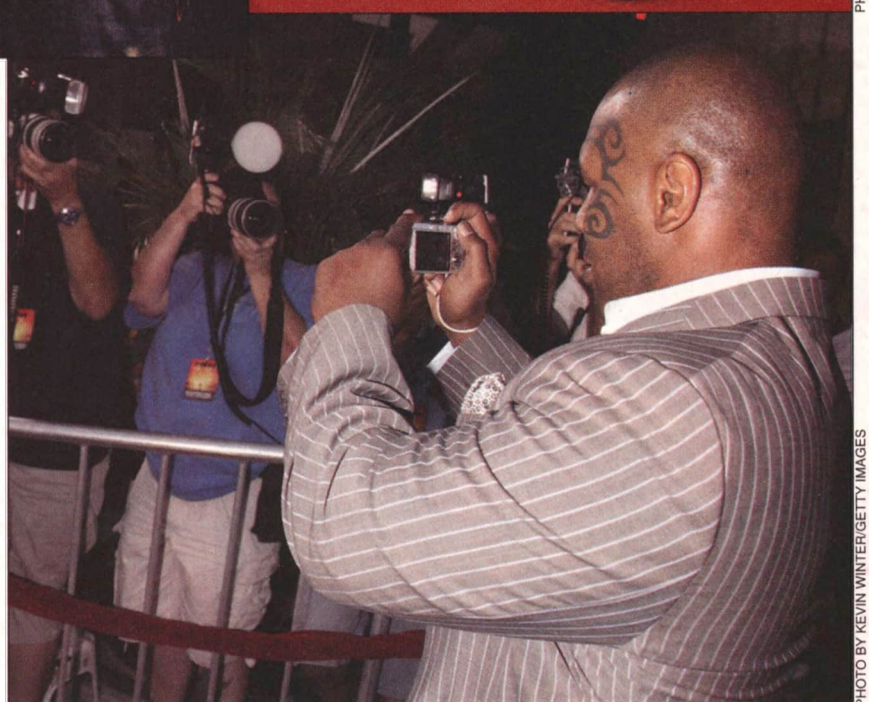


PHOTO BY KEVIN WINTER/GETTY IMAGES

By Don Stewart

Juan Manuel Lopez Junior Featherweight

Back in junior high and high school, Juan Manuel Lopez ran distance for the track team. His conditioning as an amateur fighter made him a natural at events such as the 1,200 and 5,000 meters, as did his big lungs and high threshold for pain.

Lopez ultimately stuck with boxing, and for good reason. The talented junior featherweight's run to a world title could be more of a sprint than a marathon.

"I think I have proven myself to be very mature at this stage of my career," Lopez said through translator Ricardo Jimenez of Top Rank. "My trainers and myself, we feel we're ready to take on anybody in my division. I think it's just a matter of time before they put a world champion in front of me."

In less than three years as a pro, the 24-year-old Lopez is being dubbed the second coming of Wilfredo Gomez. Like "Bazooka," Lopez is a Puerto Rican junior feather with heavyweight power. Only two of his 19 pro opponents thus far have heard the final bell.

But the 5'7" southpaw seems just as capable of pitching a 12-round shutout as dishing out a one-round beatdown. He already has the presence and maturity of a seasoned pro, along with quick hands and smooth reflexes. Top Rank has matched him against vets with 31, 41, and 55 wins, but "Juanma" has looked like the more poised fighter each time out.

It's why the charismatic Lopez is considered one of the hottest prospects in the sport.

"I see some similarities with Gomez," Top Rank matchmaker Bruce Trampler said. "His potential is unlimited. We're all excited about him. We think he has the chance to do something special."

Lopez said he's driven by the pressure to live up to those lofty expectations. But his chief motivation is his family.

Lopez has been married since 2002. He and his wife, Barbara, have five children—Steph, 10, Raymond, 8, Alexandra, 7, Beliza, 3, and Juan Manuel Jr., 1. The oldest three are from Barbara's previous marriage. "I consider all the kids mine," Lopez said. "I love them all just the same."

Having a family, especially one so large, at such a young age has made Lopez extremely serious about his career. With so many depending on those fast fists, boxing is no longer just a sport. Added pressure? Sure, but it's the type of pressure that forces some young fighters to mature early, to stay focused, to steer clear of drugs, alcohol, and other trappings of fame.

"I think it has kept me away from a lot of things," Lopez said. "I call it 'being with my foot in the earth.' It doesn't let me get my head too high. I know I'm working for them, to give them everything I can. This is a way to feed my family and get everything we need."

Lopez says he's ready for world champ Israel Vazquez, Rafael Marquez, and the rest of the division's elite. That might seem a little too much too soon, but those guys don't scare someone whose toughest fights came as a boy growing up in the rugged barrios of Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico.

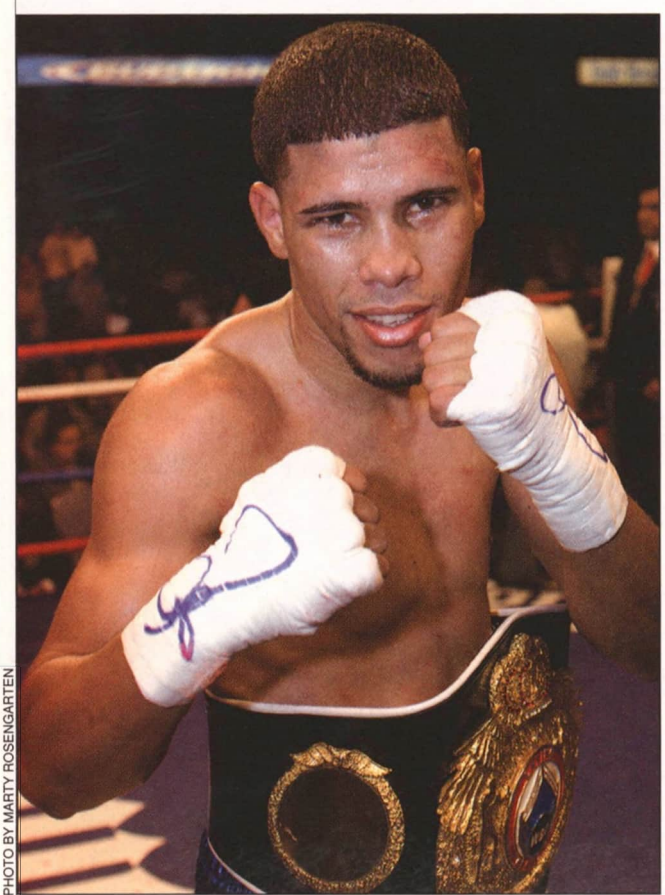
Lopez is no giant, and he was obviously smaller as a kid. He says "sometimes you win, sometimes you lose" when

(Continued on Page122)

Pro Record

2005		
Jan. 29	Luis Daniel Colon, Bayamon, P.R.	KO 1
Feb. 26	Ivan Cordero, Bayamon	KO 1
April 30	Efrain Perez, Hato Rey, Puerto Rico	KO 1
June 11	Eric Nemo, New York, NY	KO 3
Aug. 20	Charles Jones, Ponce, Puerto Rico	KO 1
Sept. 30	Roberto Chacon, San Juan, Puerto Rico	KO 1
Nov. 18	Luis Bolano, Hato Rey	KO 3
Dec. 10	Manuel Sarabia, San Juan	KO 1
2006		
Jan. 21	Jose Luis Caro, Las Vegas, NV	KO 3
March 4	Gilberto Bolanos, Bayamon	W 8
April 7	Alberto Chuc, San Juan	KO 6
June 10	Sergio Mendez, New York	W 6
July 21	Edel Ruiz, Uncasville, CT	KO 7
Sept. 30	Jose Alonso, Caguas, Puerto Rico	KO 3
2007		
Jan. 19	Cuaghtemoc Vargas, Phoenix, AZ	KO 6
March 3	Leivi Brea, San Juan	KO 2
April 28	Jorge Otero, Barranquilla, Colombia	KO 7
June 22	Giovanni Andrade, San Juan	KO 1
Aug. 4	Hugo Dianzo, Rosemont, IL	KO 10

FIGHTS	WON	LOST	DRAW	KOs
19	19	0	0	17



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May 1992: Boxing's Four-Star Future: Toney, Bowe, Norris, And McGirt. Also: McCallum-Toney, Junior Jones, Sonny Liston, Year That Was: 1980, Chavez-McGirt preview.

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March 1995: An American Love Story: Why We're Crazy About Big George. Also: Danny Romero, 32 stars of tomorrow, Vincent Pettway, Johnny Tocco, Young Stribling, Holmes-McCall preview.

May 1995: '95 Alive! The 10 Fights We'd Like To See. Also: Roy Jones, Bob Lee, Bobby Crabtree, Owen Moran, Vasquez-Whitaker preview.

July 1995: Tyson-The Five Men He Should Fight … And The Five He Should Avoid. Also: Benn-McClellan, Holyfield-Mercer preview, Arnie Rosenthal.

Jan. 1996: Holyfield Answers The Tough Questions. Also: Wayne McCullough, puncher vs. puncher, Paul Vaden, pay-per-view.

March 1996: Amidst The Confusion … Bowe Stands Tall. Also: Whitaker vs. Greats, British tragedies, Tim Witherspoon, Frank Warren, Benn-Collins preview.

May 1996: Bruno's Better, Tyson's Worse … Will It Make A Difference? Also: Arturo Gatti, Gerry Cooney, Frans Botha, Hector Camacho.

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May 1997: Evander Holyfield—Five Questions That Must Be Answered. Also: Ray Mercer, Phillip Holiday, Tommy Brooks, Jimmy Braddock, Carmen Basilio.

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Jan. 2001: Looking For That Crossover Superstar: Can Sugar Shane Put A "Tiger" In Boxing's Tank? Also: Zab Judah, Lou Del Valle, Eric Morel, 1975 vs. 2000, Lewis-Tua preview.

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May 2002: Wladimir Klitschko: Is He The Next Great Heavyweight? Also: Oliver McCall, Manuel Medina, Paul Spadafora, Barrera-Morales II preview, 2001 in review.

Sept. 2002: Boxing By The Numbers: A Different Look At The Best Of The Best. Also: Zab Judah, Barrera-Morales, Antonio Margarito & Daniel Santos, Tokunbo Olajide, DeMarcus Corley.

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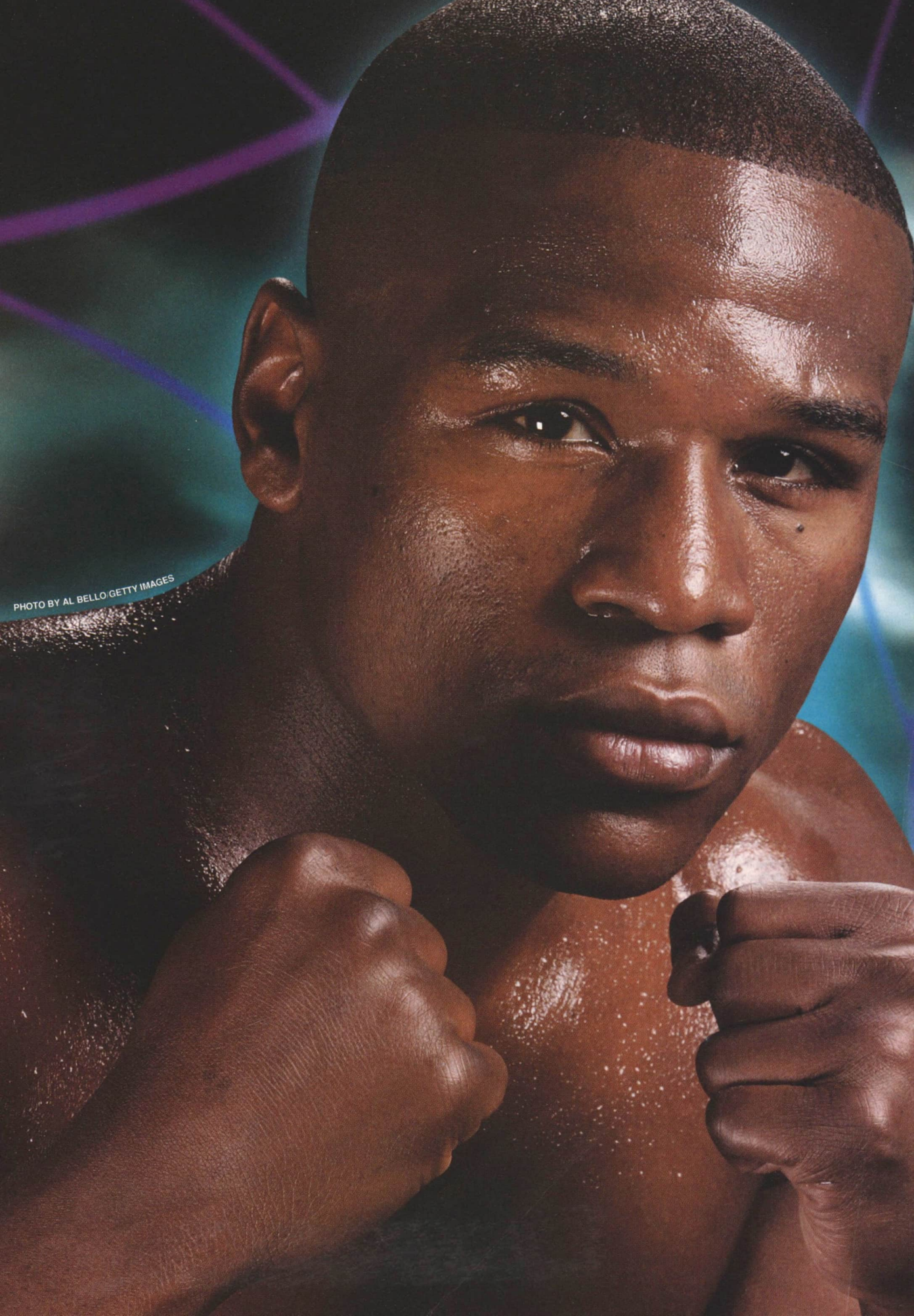

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Is Floyd Mayweather Dancing With Disaster . . .

Or Multitasking His Way Into The Mainstream?

By David Mayo

Floyd Mayweather spent the better part of a year planning his retirement from boxing, and even longer plotting his newest endeavor as a competitive ballroom dancer. So who knew he not only would find himself compelled to fight again in 2007, but also tempted to quit *Dancing With The Stars* after one practice?

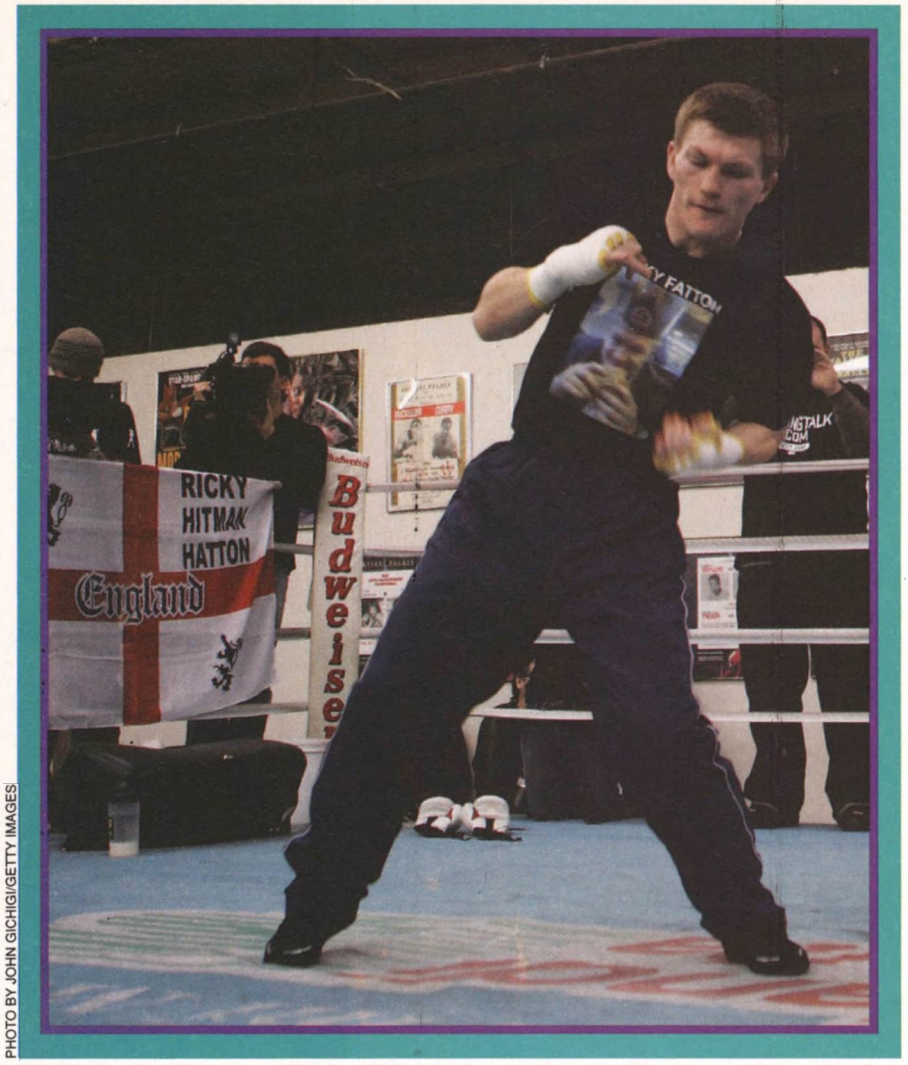


PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

While Mayweather trips the light fantastic on* Dancing With The Stars, *Hatton will be focused entirely on prepping for their fight, restricting his footwork to practicing his boxing moves in the gym. Ironically both fighters will probably benefit from "Pretty Boy's" appearance on the popular TV show when it comes to pay-per-view sales.

It wouldn't go down that way—not the premature retirement, with the unfinished business of Ricky Hatton hanging, and certainly not spurning network television after 11 years of zigzagged mainstream pursuit.

Ballroom dance is an excruciatingly detailed exercise, but nothing compared to winning all those championship fights, and earning the right to peek over the mainstream barrier by performance, only to tiptoe away by reputation. Mayweather made that mistake already, in boardrooms and in courtrooms. Yet four years have passed without legal incident or significant oral blunder, during which his boxing career exploded, placing some media and fans in an unusual position: They find themselves behind the mainstream curve on one of their own.

The crossover happened, years after it was declared impossible. A few clean-nosed years, remaining undefeated, and gaining an identity-propelling win over Oscar De La Hoya were all Mayweather needed to crash through.

Boxing knows Mayweather's story more intimately than the general populace. Mainstream knows just enough to want more, and to what extent it attempts to probe old personal issues, Mayweather has decided to stiff-arm it. He might address the odd question about his father—particularly if Floyd Mayweather Sr. has spouted off recently—but otherwise has taken a look-forward stance on his professional and personal lives.

"Everybody is entitled to their opinion," Mayweather said. "I just don't deal with the negative stuff anymore. I'm enjoying myself, and now I have another task to take on."

Mayweather's brashness again blazed brightly with his decision to participate in ABC's wildly popular dance show while training for the December 8 Hatton bout. The last night of *Dancing With The Stars* is November 24, two weeks before the fight.

The dance competition began September 24, two weeks before Mayweather opened formal training camp. That means three-fourths of training could be overlapped by three-hour daily dance sessions, along with weekly round-trips between Las Vegas and Los Angeles for television shows.

That decision ultimately will raise all sorts of questions about Mayweather's dedication to the fight, which is the one issue he never has faced before. Former light heavyweight champion Eddie Mustafa Muhammad, a periodic attendee at Mayweather training sessions, said, "I've never seen anyone train like Floyd trains—actually, I've never seen anything close to it."

"I'm dedicated to the sport of boxing," Mayweather said. "I still love the sport of boxing. My retirement was short, so there was no time for a party, but you live and you learn. It's unreal, everything I've been able to do in my career. People say I'm bigheaded, people say I'm cocky. But I just think I'm the best in the business, and I think I have the best team in the business. Without all those pieces in place, I wouldn't have an opportunity to do something like *Dancing With The Stars*."

Leonard Ellerbe, Mayweather's closest confidant and adviser, said he worked more than a year to get the fighter on the dance show, which in past seasons has included appearances by Evander Holyfield and Laila Ali. He expressed surprise at the steep learning curve, and when asked how the fighter would blend dance and fight training, and how normal routine would be altered, Ellerbe replied, "Honestly, we don't have a clue, but Floyd will do whatever is necessary to succeed at both.

"When he wins this thing, he'll be bigger than life, and he'll raise the profile of boxing with him," said Ellerbe. "He will pull this off. It's all about bringing a new face

to the sport, and he is in front of the pack. He is the face of boxing. This is a whole new challenge for Floyd, but it's also a whole new challenge for anyone who has done *Dancing With The Stars*. Emmitt Smith, he was a great football player, a wonderful person, a great guy, and he won this dance competition, and put an unbelievable amount of time into doing it. Now, imagine Emmitt Smith doing the dance competition, and two weeks later being in the Super Bowl. That's what we're talking about."

Ah, yes. The end game is a fight against Hatton, who also is unbeaten, and whom Mayweather acknowledged as the legitimate, linear 140-pound champion during those scant three weeks between his upset of Kostya Tszyu and Mayweather's win over Arturo Gatti, both in June 2005.

However, when Hatton said he didn't want to fight Mayweather in an immediate unification, that declaration changed just as quickly, and Mayweather certainly won't restate it now—at least, not until late on the evening of December 8, when he declares what a worthy opponent Hatton was.

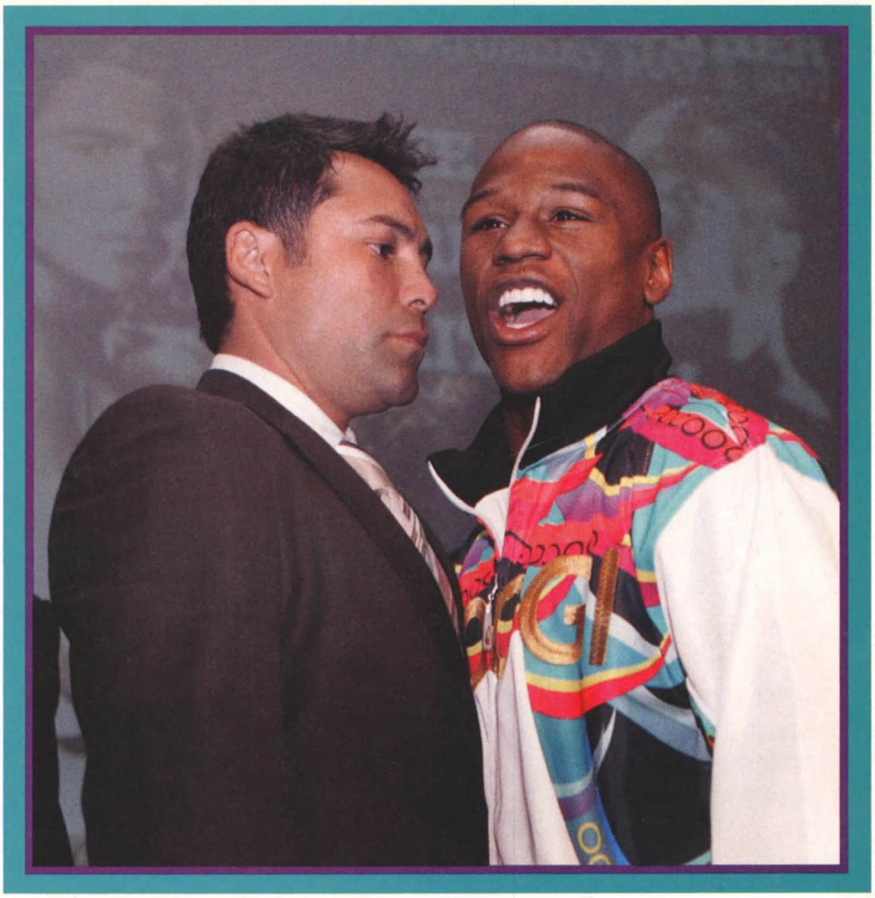


PHOTO BY DON EMMERT/GETTY IMAGES

Mayweather, the self-described "king of trash talk," gives De La Hoya an earful during the press tour for their May showdown, which turned out to be the richest fight in history. Mayweather-Hatton might not be quite as big, but Pretty Boy's antics certainly won't hurt sales.

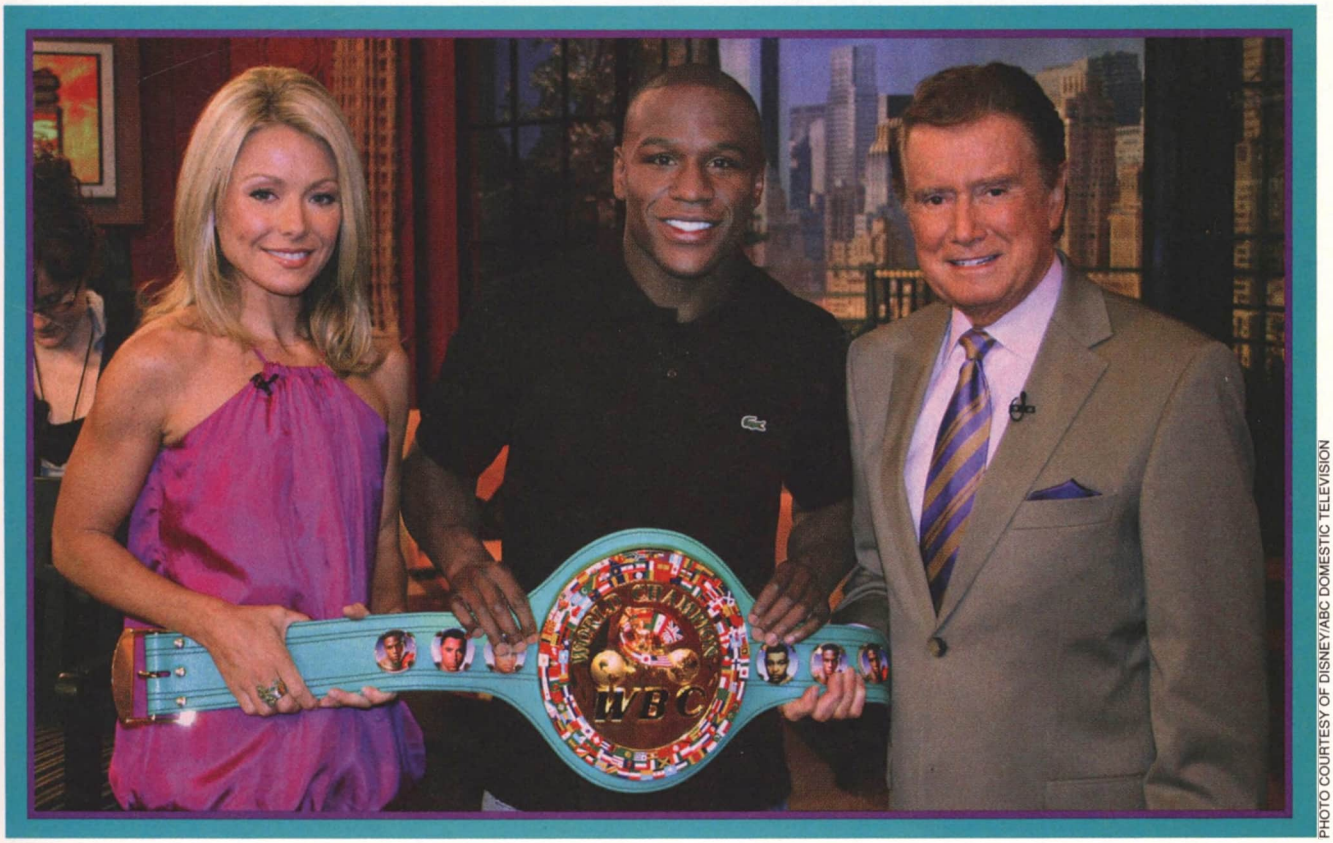


PHOTO COURTESY OF DISNEY/ABC DOMESTIC TELEVISION

At this point in his career, the WBC title belt doesn't mean as much to Mayweather as his desire to establish himself as a mainstream superstar. "Pretty Boy" looks pretty good posing with Kelly Ripa and Regis Philbin following an appearance on their talk show following his victory over Oscar De La Hoya in May.

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Uncle Roger works the pads with his nephew at the Mayweather Boxing Club in Las Vegas. Despite regular trips to Los Angeles to appear on* Dancing With The Stars *while prepping for Hatton, the trainer is okay with his charge's decision to compete in the televised dancing contest.

"After he said he wouldn't fight me, you certainly couldn't call him the legitimate 140-pound champion, not when he was ducking and dodging me," Mayweather said. "Now, I'm hearing that the kid's been trash-talking me. That's a mistake. We all know I'm the king of trash-talking."

Stunning that there might be some prefight bad blood, though that stuff plays well in the mainstream, particularly when balanced against Mayweather at his "Pretty Boy" best, cha-chaing on prime-time television, before cha-chinging another pay-per-view windfall.

He is the pound-for-pound boss, the crossover boxer, the network dancer. There always will be a significant element of the population tuning in to see that kind of kingdom toppled. It's human nature, even among those who like Mayweather, to wonder whether this is when he falters. The question this time is whether that comeuppance comes at the hands of Hatton, or the feet of Marie Osmond or Wayne Newton.

Regardless, Mayweather will gross more than $35-million in ring earnings this year, which could place him as high as second among all athletes in 2007, just behind De La Hoya, and just ahead of the best-known athletes in baseball, soccer, and Formula One racing. And the potential impact of the dance appearance, and tapping into 25 million mainstream viewers in the weeks preceding a pay-per-view fight, is uniquely immeasurable.

Roger Mayweather was most likely to object, but supported the dance decision as a marketing imperative. The trainer opposed his nephew's retirement plan, so he was pleased with both major developments in Team Mayweather since the De La Hoya fight. He also predicted Hatton would not be his nephew's final opponent.

"I feel he'll fight, at least, about five more fights," Roger said. "The reason I say that is if he gets by Ricky Hatton, there's still Shane Mosley out there. There's still Miguel Cotto out there. There's still a De La Hoya rematch out there. If Kostya Tszyu came back and got a couple of wins, he could even be in line. Floyd is still only 30 years old. There are a lot of fights out there for him."

Roger Mayweather's last significant title fight was a 1995 decision loss to Tszyu, in Australia, a decade before Tszyu's loss to Hatton in Manchester, England.

"Tszyu was fighting in Hatton's hometown. And Hatton was fighting him dirty, and they were letting him get away with it," he said. "He hit Tszyu low, all that stuff. He got away with everything in the world. That had a lot to do with it. Hatton is just physical. He has no real boxing skills, he's just physical. He's going to come right in. Other

than that, you can't really miss him."

The first day boxing's finest practitioner went into a ballroom dance class, he admits he wanted to quit. Mayweather is an excellent freestyle and hip-hop dancer, but was surprised at ballroom's delicate balance, intricate placement of hands and feet, and frequent pivots. Karina Smirnoff, his pro partner, immediately warned him the slightest slip is subject to judging rebuke. Mayweather quickly began to draw comparisons between dance and something more familiar.

That was the athletically analytical side of Mayweather. The curse-bombing cad boxing fans saw on HBO's *24/7* was his P.T. Barnum side. That four-part series began with De La Hoya as featured attraction; but months later, the only enduring memories are Mayweather's over-the-top antics. To draw a comparison with another reality series, De La Hoya played Flava Flav, and Mayweather was the show-stealing character who called herself New York—right down to the spin-off television stardom.

If you don't get that, you might be one of those slightly off-mainstream boxing aficionados who can recite every punch of Mayweather's win over Carlos Gerena, but can't identify any of the other *Dancing With The Stars* contestants. That's all right. You're not alone.

Mayweather knows he always will face recycled questions about old personal scars by reporters who learn about him through Google. He doesn't like them, but has been prone to answering them differently at different times—"Every day, my tolerance level is different," he explained—which is probably why he continues facing them.

"I've always been fighting through obstacles, going back to when I was a little kid, and the difficulties my mother and father had," he said. "Every time people said I couldn't do it, I fought through it. That's what made me a world champion."

He has made some inroads in the music industry, and helped in the promotion of the recent Beyonce tour, a direct benefit of his relationship with adviser Al Haymon, a veteran concert promoter who is one of boxing's most important silent players—he doesn't grant interviews—but whose involvement in Mayweather's career began during one of its lowest points (a no-contest plea to misdemeanor battery in a bar fight in Michigan), and spanned its highest points (pay-per-view stardom, the De La Hoya extravaganza, and *Dancing With The Stars*).

Mayweather still indulges the appetites of wealth. Cars, jewelry, and women seem to accompany eight-figure purses, but eight-nights-a-week clubbing is a thing of his past. He still likes the occasional nightclub—*24/7* showed tape of his 30th birthday party, at a strip club, just before training camp for the De La Hoya fight began—though he is bodyguard-insulated when he does, and is more apt to "stay at the house, let my legs rest, and just appreciate my hard work, enjoy the nice toys, the beautiful mansion.

"At the end of the day, what people should know about me is I'm appreciative of everything that has happened in my life," he said. "I know how to say thank you."

No one would relive his life exactly the same. There are a few outside-the-ring jabs Mayweather should have holstered. He absolutely has a dark side, which in recent years he has harnessed into his boxing, and into building a cosmetic bad-boy image. So he drops a few dozen four-letter bombs on subscription network. The critics lambaste him. He wins the pre-fight audience, then the fight itself, which becomes the richest in history, and the long-standing question of when he would tailor his behavior to becoming a crossover athlete was altered.

He is a crossover athlete, and his tailored behavior had a lot to do with it. It wasn't the kind of behavior his critics wanted. It relies heavily on an undefeated record for sustenance. Nevertheless, for each person who has tap-danced on his character, three or four others will let him waltz into their living rooms. It was a typical Mayweather exchange, with greater than usual dividends. ■

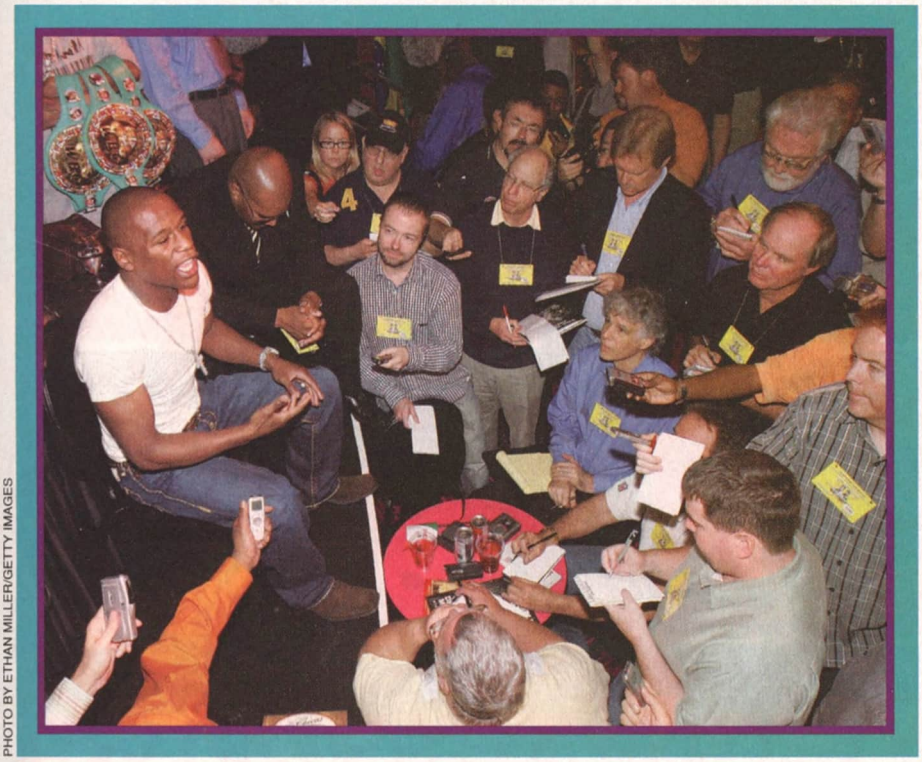


PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Mayweather holds court with the media during his final news conference prior to the De La Hoya fight. In a weird turn of events, the mainstream might have a better opinion of Mayweather than hardcore boxing fans that have followed his career (and outside-of-the-ring misbehavior) for years.

David Mayo covers boxing for the Grand Rapids (Michigan) Press and is a regular contributor to THE RING.

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

Mayweather vs. Hatton

What The Experts Are Saying

The cherry on top of the feast of excellent fights to close out the 2007 comes on December 8, when world junior welterweight champion Ricky Hatton challenges Floyd Mayweather for the welterweight championship of the world. The highly anticipated superfight, which will be held at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas and televised by HBO Pay-Per-View, will also mark the first time two reigning RING champions face each other since the magazine launched its Championship Policy in 2002.

Both men enter the fight coming off huge victories. Mayweather, 38-0 (24), secured the most important win of his career to date by decisioning Oscar De La Hoya in May. One month later, Hatton, 43-0 (31), one-upped Mayweather when he needed only three rounds to vanquish Jose Luis Castillo, with whom Mayweather went the distance twice in 2002.

The match, which pits brilliant boxer Mayweather against savvy slugger Hatton, could very well have ramification long after the final bell has sounded.

Some consider a victory for Mayweather a foregone conclusion, but over the centuries the Sweet Science has provided countless upsets. Therefore, in order to get a more comprehensive viewpoint, THE RING polled 20 experts, from Europe and North America, for their opinions and predictions as to what they think will happen when "Pretty Boy" meets "The Hitman."

Don Chargin (Hall of Fame promoter): "It's a very good matchup. Hatton has the kind of style that Floyd shouldn't take lightly, because he jumps right on you. A lot of people think it will be real easy for Floyd, but I don't think so. I can envision this being very, very close. Floyd likes to dictate the pace of a fight, and when he feels like it, take time off. He won't get that luxury with Hatton. Floyd's people are trying to convince him this will be a tough fight. Floyd will win a decision, but he'll come out knowing he was in a fight."

Andre Berto (undefeated welterweight prospect): "Hatton could pressure Mayweather the whole fight and beat him, or Mayweather could box the heck out of him. I may go against the odds with this and say Hatton will beat Mayweather. Going up in weight, maybe Mayweather will try sitting down more on his punches, instead of the lightweight Mayweather, who kept moving. I don't see Hatton stopping him, but I'll say Hatton by decision."

Rich Marotta (television and radio broadcaster): "Hatton will exert far more pressure on Mayweather than Oscar De La Hoya did. Oscar's approach was far more measured, designed to box his way in close and then unload bodyshots. Hatton will not bother with the boxing part. He'll charge at Mayweather. I suspect he'll have some success, but in the end, the speed, smarts, and talent of Mayweather will prevail. I see Mayweather winning, but not by much, along the lines of 115-113."

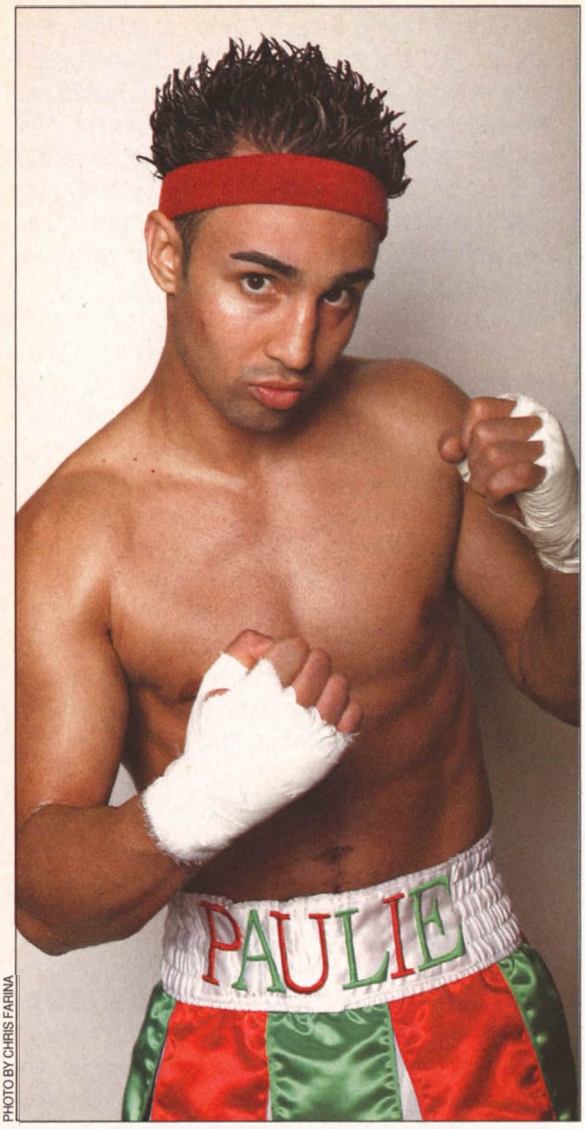


PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Junior welterweight contender Paul Malignaggi feels Mayweather is a bad matchup for Hatton, giving the "Hitman" absolutely no shot at all of beating "Pretty Boy."

George Zeleny (contributor to British *Boxing News*): "In 1986, Donald 'The Cobra' Curry was considered the best pound-for-pound fighter in the world until unheralded Brit Lloyd Honeyghan destroyed him in six rounds. A similar scenario exists with the upcoming Floyd Mayweather-Ricky Hatton fight. Floyd is skillful, beyond doubt, loves to dictate the pace of a fight, and do just enough to win. But Hatton is going to attack him relentlessly from the first bell. Ricky has a great chance of puncturing the fragile psyche of Floyd, forcing him to crack. I go for Hatton by late-stoppage."

Steve Farhood (*ShoBox* commentator): "I don't think it will be a very good fight. I see Hatton fighting as he always does, coming straight forward, and I see Mayweather countering that by either holding or punching and moving away. Hatton's track record at welterweight is only one fight, and he didn't look particularly good. I always felt that he peaked in beating Kostya Tszyu and he'll never match that performance. Even if he matches that performance in this fight, it won't be good enough. Mayweather on points in an ugly fight."

Mark Collings (British boxing writer): "I know a lot of people in the States don't think that Ricky can beat Mayweather—or even has a chance. But Ricky genuinely believes he can win, and he's incredibly intelligent. That will work against Mayweather. He'll use the same tactics as he did when he beat Kostya Tszyu. He'll hit Mayweather wherever possible. I can see Ricky jumping on Mayweather early, as he did against Tszyu. He'll make it uncomfortable for Mayweather. He'll build an early points lead and hold it. I'll go out on a limb and say Ricky will win by decision."

Don McRae (*The Guardian* boxing writer and author of *Dark Trade: Lost In Boxing*): "In a tough and brutal encounter, which will surprise both Floyd Mayweather and much of American boxing. Hatton will test the finest fighter on the planet. This will be a far closer and rougher battle that many expect in the States. Mayweather will not enjoy the experience—especially when Hatton lands to the body—but the American will prevail in the end through his superior skills to take an extremely narrow but unanimous decision. But the brave and impressive Hatton will have earned even more respect and the right to call for a rematch."

Paul Williams (welterweight contender): "I'll go with Floyd. It will be competitive, if Hatton goes after him. Getting close to Floyd could be a problem. Hatton can't outbox Floyd; he'll have to press him. But Floyd won't be there to be pressed. If the ref will let Hatton do what he's done in the past, it will be a close fight. I do give Hatton a chance. Everyone who goes in the ring has a chance. It could take only one punch to change the fight."

Stuart Brennan (*Manchester Evening News* boxing writer): "Obviously, it's by far Ricky's hardest-ever fight. Everyone wrote him off against Tszyu and look what he did. He has more ability than people give him credit for. I know in the States he's known as a limited fighter, but I've seen him box people, brawl people, out-strength people. Ricky is a very good analyst and picks his way to beat someone. He's an incredibly hard worker. The only way he could win it is to stop Floyd. He'd have to bust Floyd up, rough him up and not let Floyd get into any kind of rhythm. I see Ricky by kayo in 10."

Teddy Atlas (ESPN2 *Friday Night Fights* analyst): "There is passion involved with this because people think Mayweather is the purest fighter out there. There are some who think you have an aggressive guy in Hatton. Some people think Floyd's eye may be off the ball a little, with his *Dancing With The Stars*. Hatton will fight in spots and grab. He'll leave opportunities to get nailed as he closes in, and Mayweather will cash in on some of those opportunities. I'm picking Mayweather by a decision."

Juan Lazcano (junior welterweight contender): "Hatton is coming off a great win, knocking out Jose Luis Castillo. But Castillo's mind wasn't in that fight. He wasn't that sharp mentally, not to take anything away from Ricky. Mayweather is coming off a close fight against De La Hoya. He has all these distractions right now, with the dance show. That's Hatton's one chance, if Floyd isn't focused. When Floyd is focused, he's extremely hard to beat. He'll beat Hatton by unanimous decision."

Paulie Malignaggi (junior welterweight contender): "It's not a good fight for Hatton. When Oscar got aggressive against Floyd, it caused Floyd some trouble. But you're also talking about someone much larger than Hatton. Hatton walks right into his opponents. He won't be able to get inside that easy against Floyd. I don't see any shot for Hatton at all. He roughs-and-tumbles his way in. Floyd will pick him off. Hatton will pay a heavy price every time he tries to get inside. Floyd will stop him late or win big unanimously."

Dan Herbert (British *Boxing News* editor): "The best scenario for Hatton is that he puts up a good fight. Hatton likes to bully his opponents and shove them around, but I just can't see him doing that against Mayweather. Mayweather's too slick and polished to let that happen. Mayweather wins by unanimous decision."

Freddie Burcombe (*News Of The World* boxing writer): "I made the mistake once before of seriously underestimating Ricky Hatton's chances. He finished up pummeling Kostya Tszyu. So it isn't blind loyalty to a Brit by suggesting he'll emerge with credit against Floyd Mayweather. Hatton reckons he'll be Mayweather's worst nightmare. However, I think cuts could turn out to be Hatton's bad dream. Cornerman Mick Williamson will be invaluable with his calm use of the swab and adrenaline, but Mayweather's angled, slicing counterpunches spell danger to those areas around the brows that have caused Hatton trouble in the past. Hatton to be covered in gory glory. Mayweather to win."

Graham MacLean (Germany-based contributor for *Boxing Monthly* and *The Guardian*): "The last time Hatton stepped up in weight, against Luis Collazo, he struggled. While Collazo is a good fighter, he is no Floyd Mayweather. I think that Mayweather will use his defensive skills to keep away from Hatton's bodyshots and coast to a clear points win."

Eric Bottjer (matchmaker): "Mayweather is a deserved favorite, but Hatton has the kind of style that can give Mayweather problems. I give Hatton a chance. De La Hoya had the plan to beat Mayweather, but he fades in fights. Hatton is much more aggressive than De La Hoya. He's tremendously strong; he doesn't fade. Hatton will fall behind on points, but will come one late. Still, I'll pick Mayweather by decision."

Keith Idec (*The Herald News* boxing writer): "As tough a guy as Hatton is, and for as much heart as he has, stylistically, it's a very difficult fight for Ricky. Say what you want about Mayweather's safety-first style, and that it might not be appealing to be public, he's absolutely brilliant. Hatton's chances will depend on who the referee is for the fight, and how much he'll let Ricky get away with. If he can rough Mayweather up, he has a chance. It won't be quite the blowout as Mayweather-Gatti was, but it will be a relatively easy fight for Mayweather. I see one of two scenarios unfolding: Hatton gets cut and stopped late, or Mayweather will by easy decision."

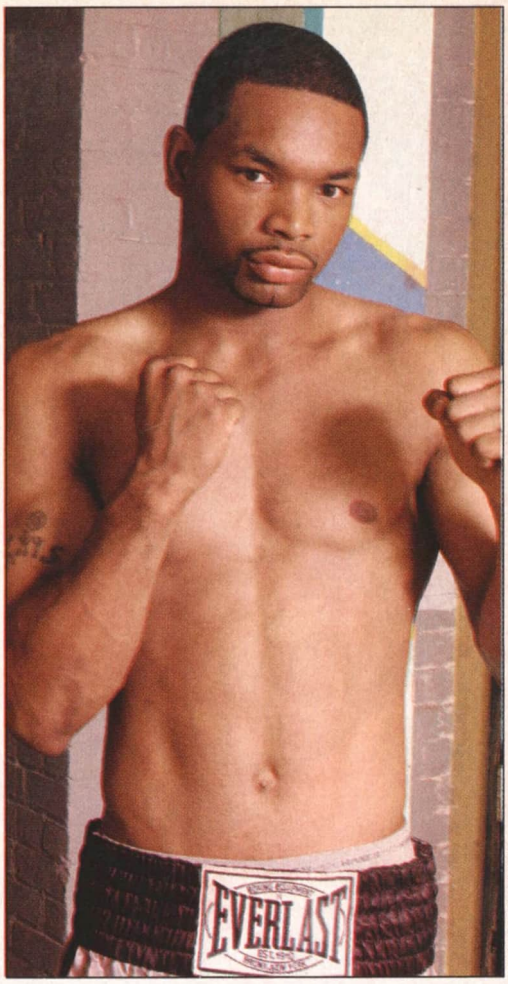


PHOTO BY FELIX NATAL

Kendall Holt thinks there's a good chance it will be an entertaining fight, but that Mayweather is too fast and skilled for the hard-charging Brit to beat.

Kendall Holt (junior welterweight contender): "I think it's going to be an entertaining fight, a lot more entertaining than Mayweather and De La Hoya. Hatton will be strong in the early rounds, but he needs to pressure Mayweather into corners and that's almost near impossible to do. Toward the later rounds, Floyd will start taking over. Mayweather will eventually dissect Hatton. I give everyone a shot win when they step into the ring, but Mayweather is too skilled and too smart for Hatton; he has too many weapons. I see Mayweather getting a 12-round unanimous decision."

George Peterson (Paul Williams' trainer): "It could turn out to be a good fight. Mayweather won't let Ricky Hatton tie him up. Hatton has a tendency to throw one, two, or three punches, and then grab you. Mayweather knows that's Hatton's only asset. Mayweather won't get a referee that will allow Hatton to do that, plus he'll make Hatton pay with punches down the middle when Hatton comes jumping in. Hatton will make Mayweather fight a little more than usual, but I see Mayweather by unanimous decision."

Buddy McGirt (trainer): "I think it's an easy fight for Mayweather. Hatton is too slow. Hatton will come right at him. What can he really do? He can't outbox Mayweather. Mayweather will eat his lunch box. It's a possibility there could be a stoppage. I see no way at all Hatton can beat him though. Floyd is at the height of his game right now, one of the best in the world. Oscar fought him well, but that's Oscar. If I'd have any advice for Hatton, it would be *not* to fight Mayweather. I'll say a unanimous decision for Mayweather."

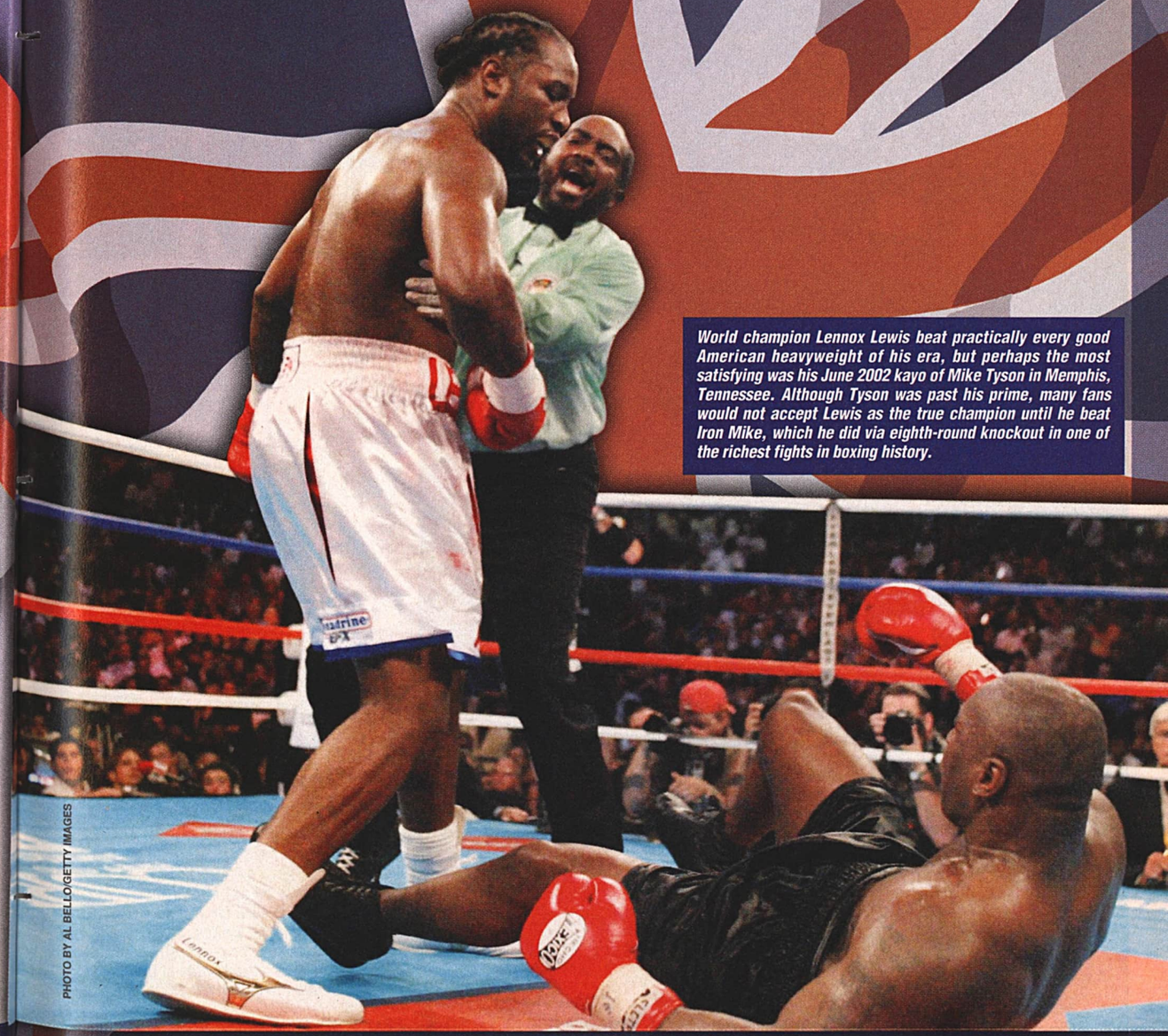
Final Tally: Mayweather 16, Hatton 4. ■

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

A Pictorial History Of One Of Boxing's Greatest Rivalries

Since the early-1800s, when black Americans Bill Richmond and Tom Molineaux sailed to England to seek their fortune as bare-knuckle boxers, there has been a fierce rivalry between British boxers and those who hail from what were once the English colonies. That rivalry has continued down the centuries and now includes the upcoming Floyd Mayweather-Ricky Hatton superfight. The photographs in this section document just a few of the great fights and fighters that have made this rivalry so compelling.

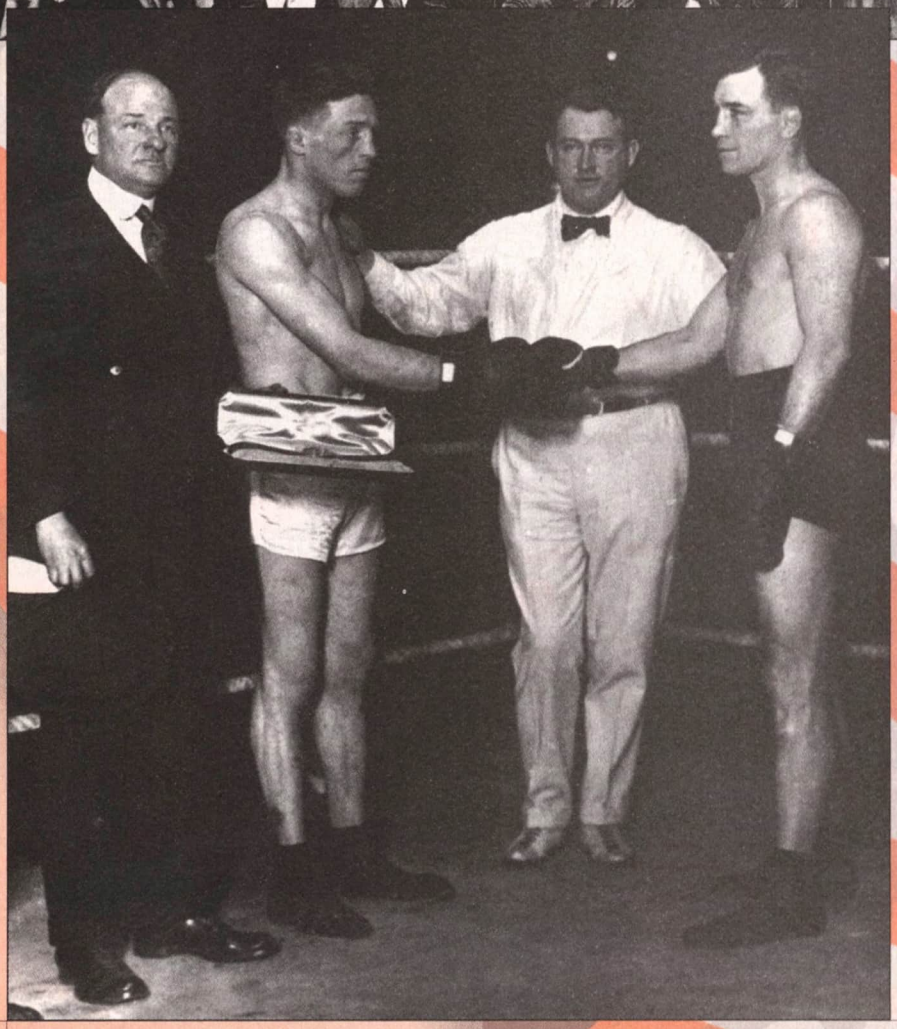
KINGDOM vs. STATES ERICA



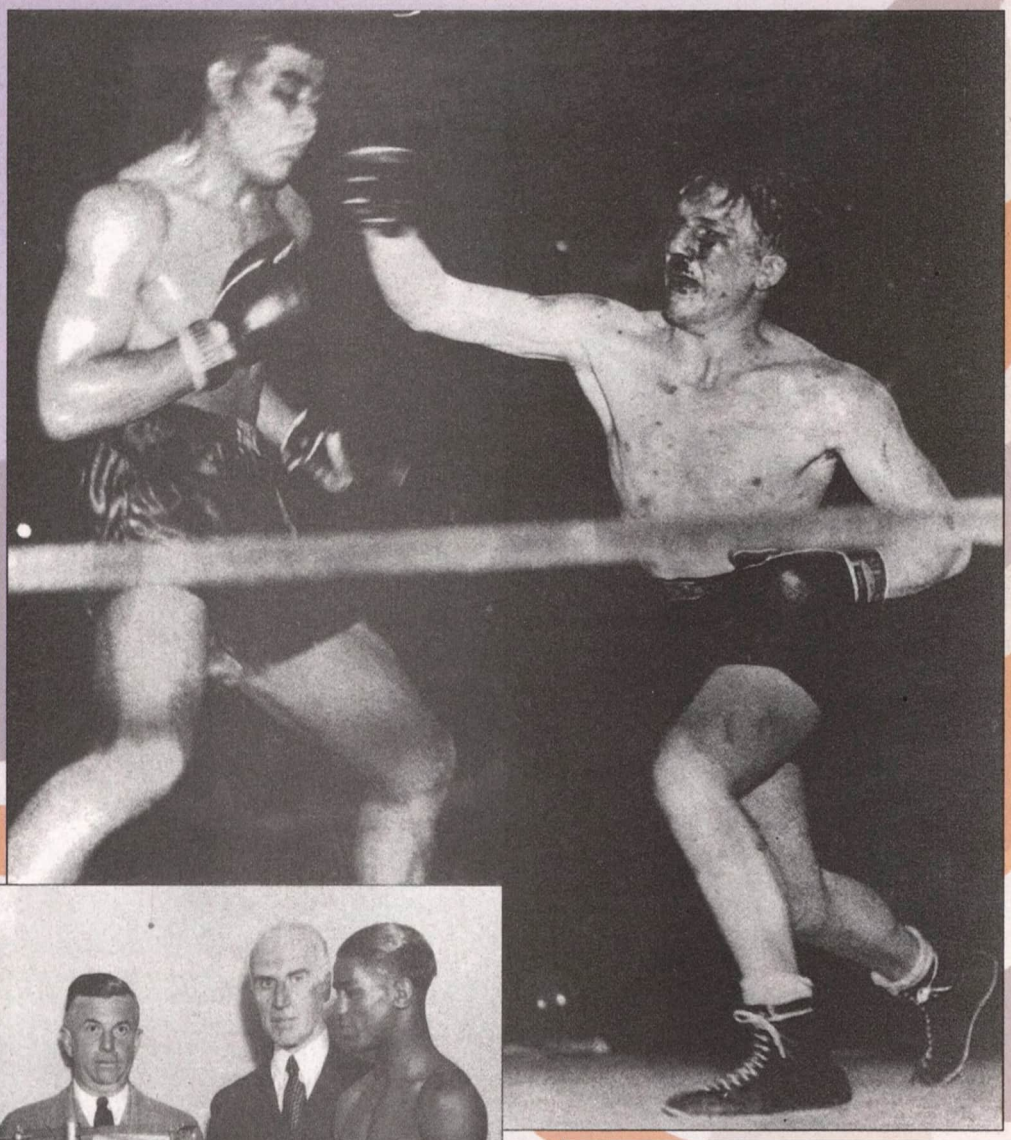
World champion Lennox Lewis beat practically every good American heavyweight of his era, but perhaps the most satisfying was his June 2002 kayo of Mike Tyson in Memphis, Tennessee. Although Tyson was past his prime, many fans would not accept Lewis as the true champion until he beat Iron Mike, which he did via eighth-round knockout in one of the richest fights in boxing history.

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

The first major international contest between an American and British fighter pitted reigning bare-knuckle heavyweight champion Tom Sayers (left) of England and John C. Heenan of the United States. It took place on April 17, 1860, in Farnborough, England, and attracted tremendous interest on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. After 2 hours and 20 minutes of brutal fighting, the bout ended in a 42-round draw.

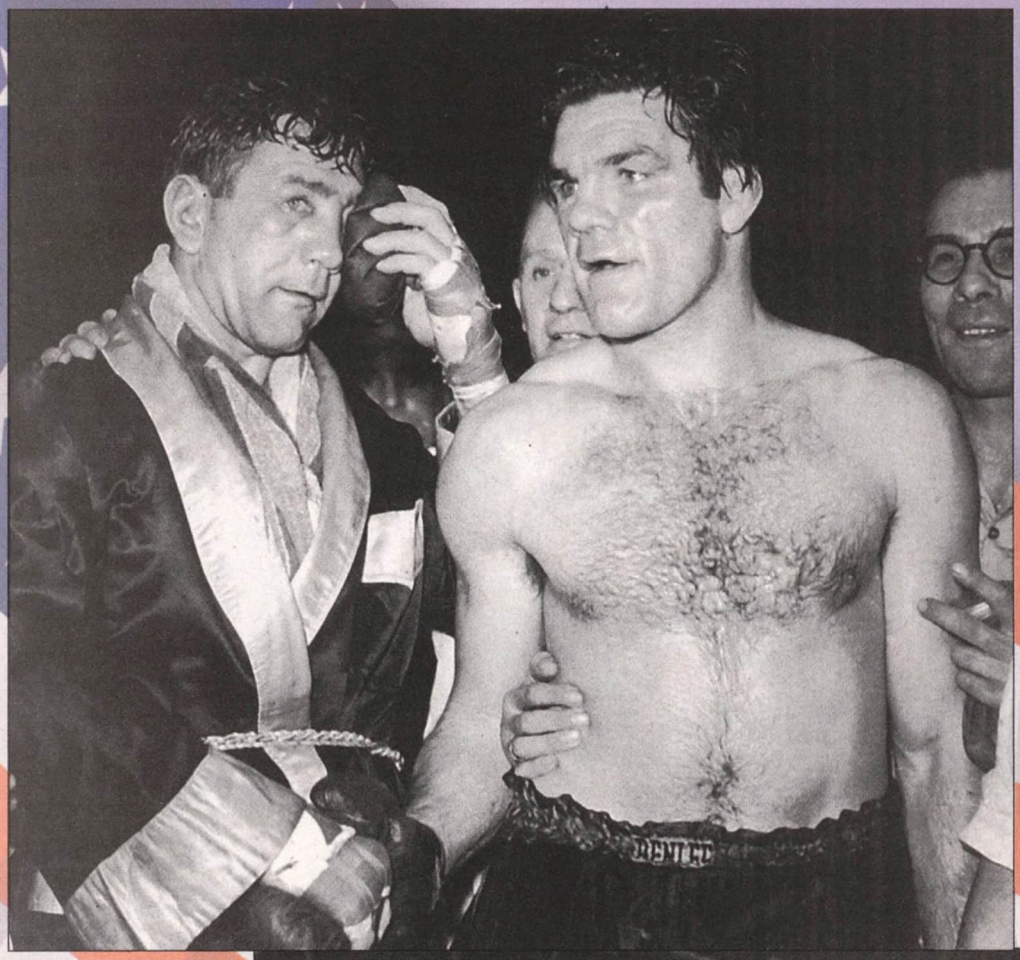


England's Ted "Kid" Lewis (left) and American Jack Britton fought each other an incredible 20 times between 1915 and 1921, with the world welterweight title on the line in four of those bouts. All 20 fights went the distance. The final tally was four wins for Britton, three for Lewis, one draw, and 12 no-decisions. All of the fights were fought on the western side of the Atlantic, 19 in the United States and one in Canada.

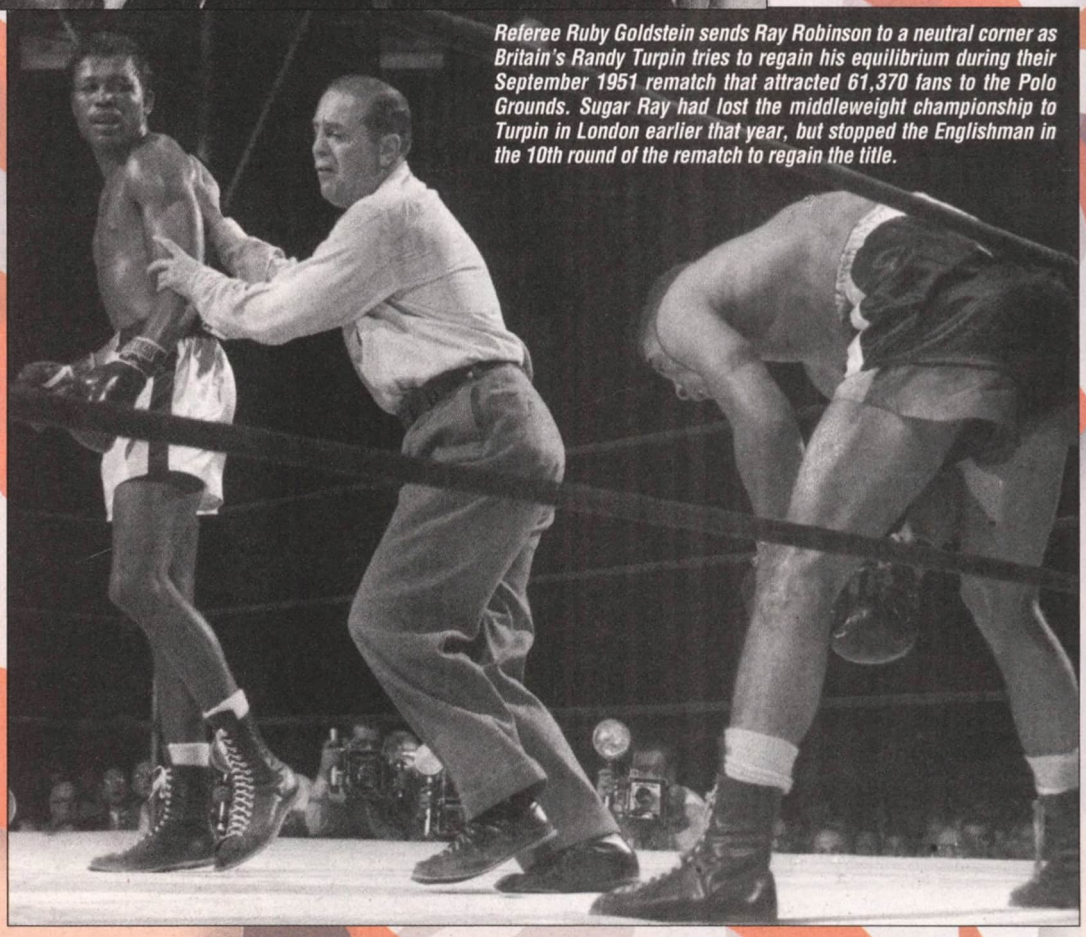


Britain's Jackie "Kid" Berg weighs in for a bout with Bruce Flowers, a top-notch lightweight from New Rochelle, New York, whom Berg decisioned three times in 1929. Berg, who was known as "The Whitechapel Whirlwind," had many fights in the U.S., beating such outstanding American fighters as Tony Conzoneri, Tippy Larkin, Billy Petrolle, and Mushy Callahan.

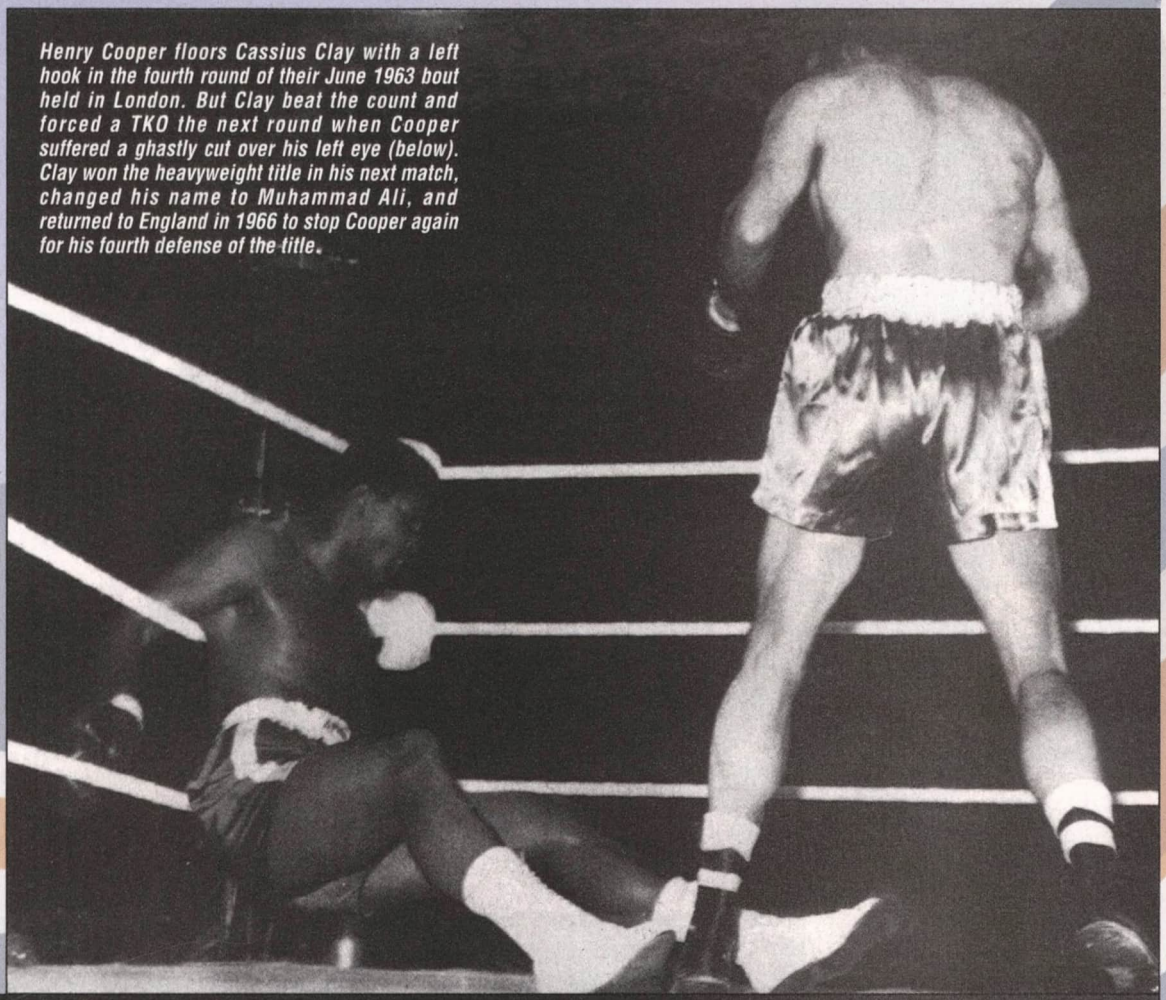
Welsh heavyweight Tommy Farr on the attack against heavyweight champion Joe Louis at Madison Square Garden in 1937. It was "The Brown Bomber's" first defense of the title he'd won two months previously and one of the most demanding fights of his long reign. Although Louis won a 15-round decision, Farr's performance is still considered among the very best ever by a British heavyweight.



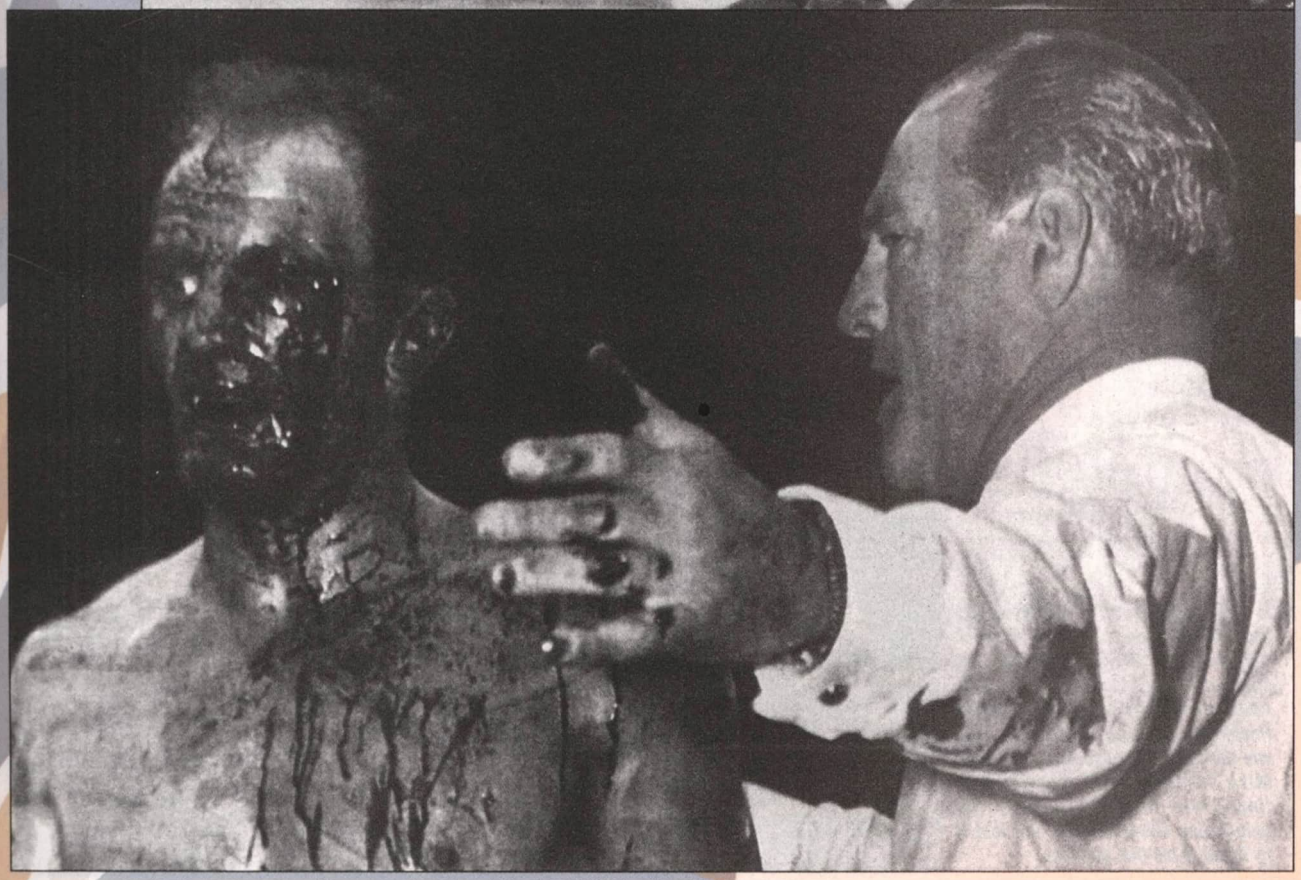
Gus Lesnevich nurses his left eye following his grueling 10-round TKO of England's Freddie Mills in a 1946 defense of the light heavyweight title. Two years later, Mills, arguably Britain's most popular fighter in the years immediately following World War II, took the title from Lesnevich via 15-round decision. Both bouts were held in London.

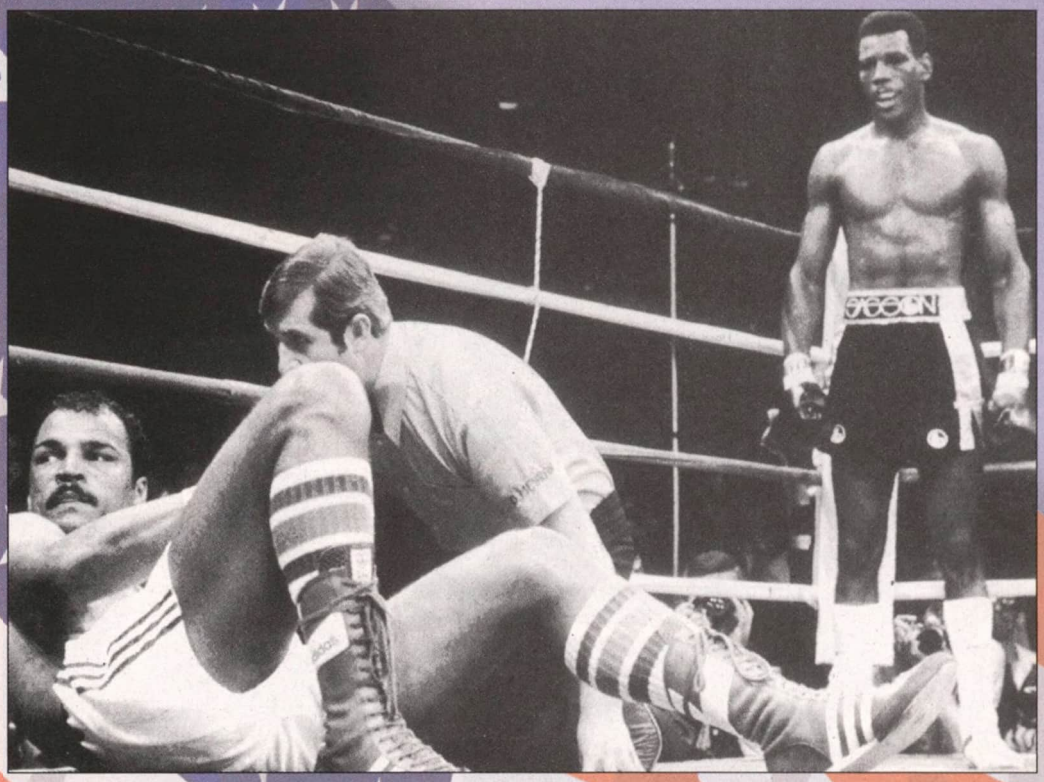


Referee Ruby Goldstein sends Ray Robinson to a neutral corner as Britain's Randy Turpin tries to regain his equilibrium during their September 1951 rematch that attracted 61,370 fans to the Polo Grounds. Sugar Ray had lost the middleweight championship to Turpin in London earlier that year, but stopped the Englishman in the 10th round of the rematch to regain the title.

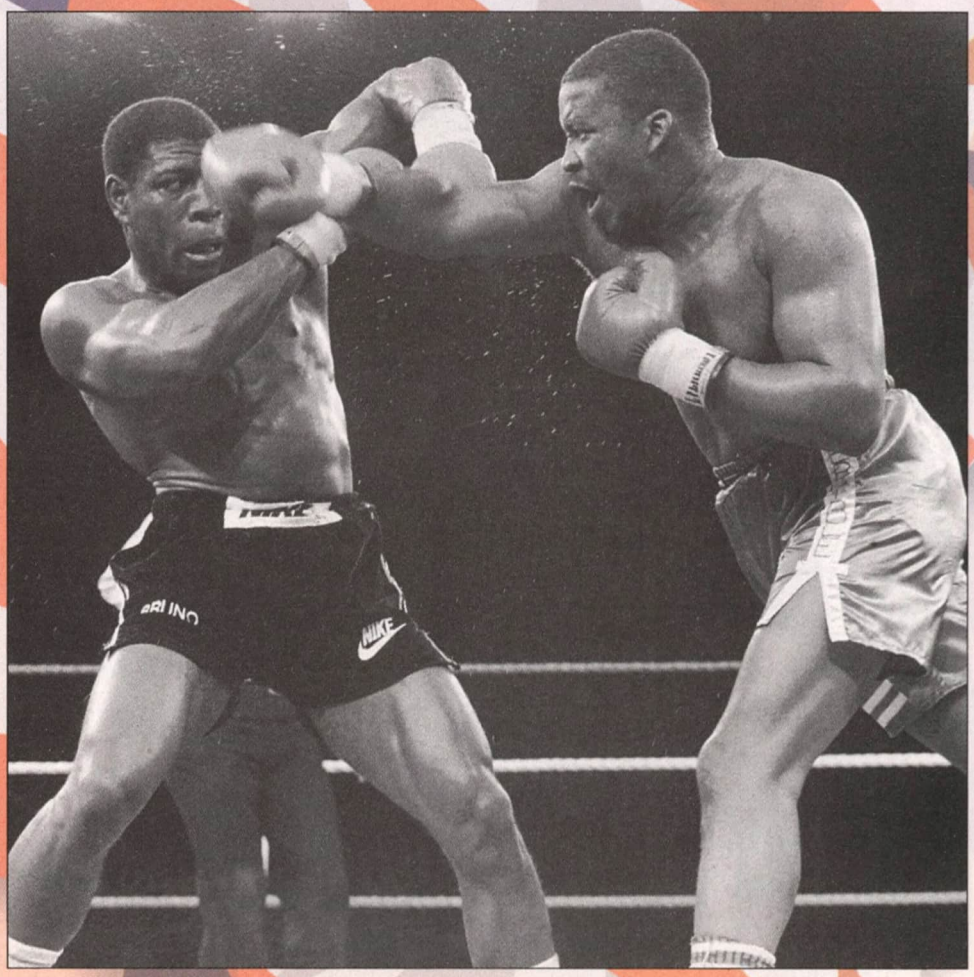


Henry Cooper floors Cassius Clay with a left hook in the fourth round of their June 1963 bout held in London. But Clay beat the count and forced a TKO the next round when Cooper suffered a ghastly cut over his left eye (below). Clay won the heavyweight title in his next match, changed his name to Muhammad Ali, and returned to England in 1966 to stop Cooper again for his fourth defense of the title.

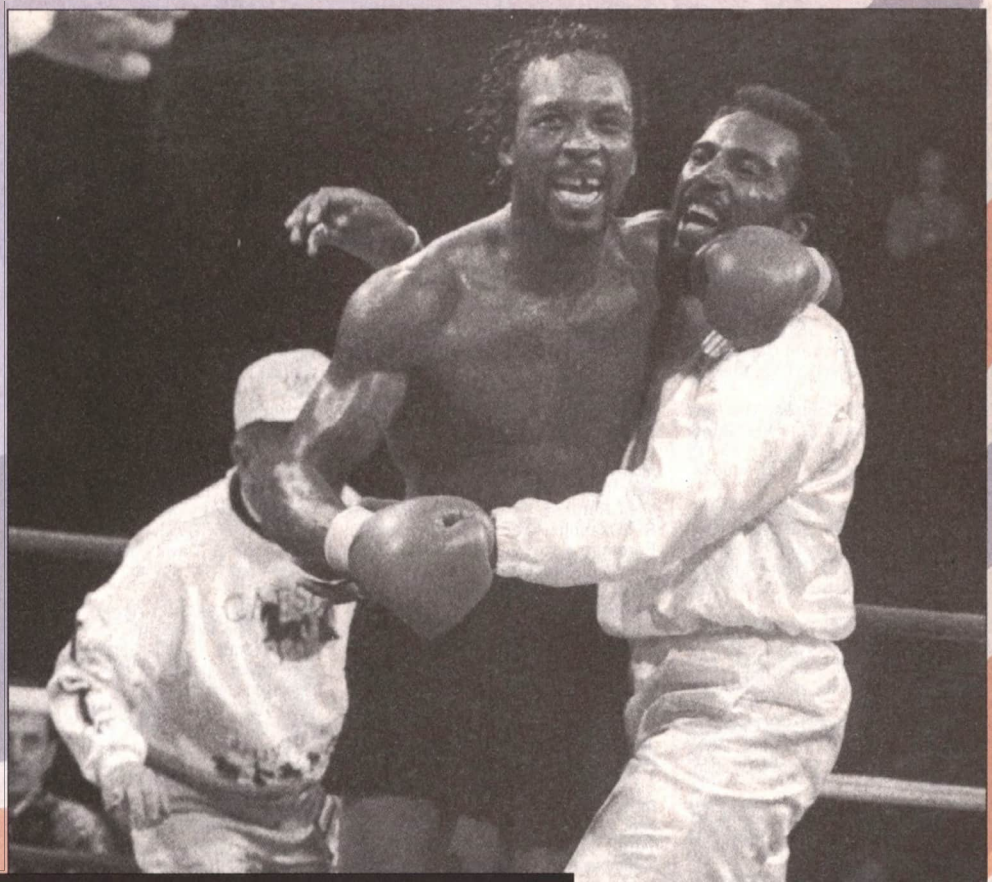




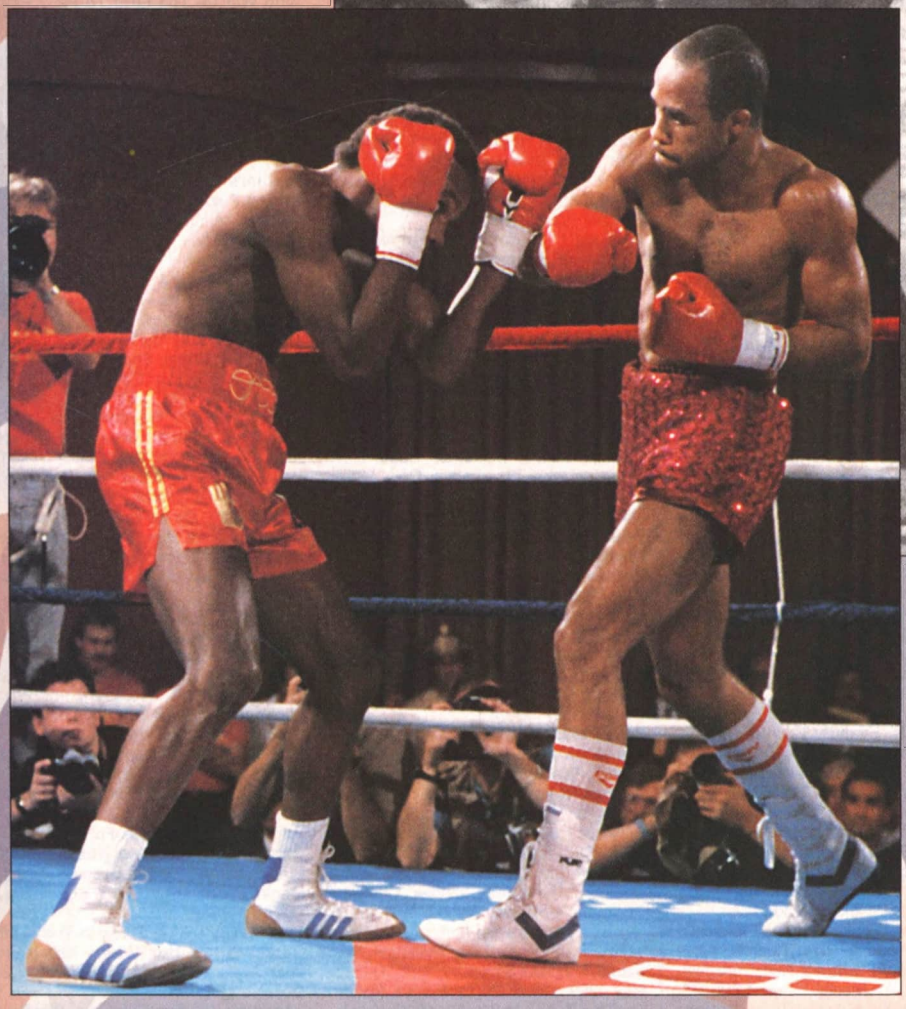
Former WBC light heavyweight titleholder John Conteh twice attempted to regain his old belt against reigning WBC boss Matthew Saad Muhammad. Their first fight, in 1979, was a vicious give-and-take bloodbath in which the Philadelphian won a close 15-round decision. But when they fought again the following year, Saad had no trouble disposing of the Englishman inside of four rounds. Both bouts took place in Atlantic City, New Jersey.



In 1986, popular British heavyweight Frank Bruno folded under the attack of American Tim Witherspoon and was stopped in the 11th round of a WBC heavyweight title fight in London (pictured). Bruno also failed in bids to win the title in a subsequent bout with Mike Tyson in 1989. The big Brit finally won the WBC strap in '95, outpointing Oliver McCall, but lost it to Tyson in his first defense.



In one of the biggest upsets in welterweight history, England's Lloyd Honeyghan (right) stopped undisputed world champion Donald Curry in the sixth round of a September 1986 bout held in Atlantic City. All told, the "Ragamuffin Man" went 4-2 in six bouts held in the United States. He also beat a number of top Americans, such as Maurice Blocker and Johnny Bumphus, in the U.K.



British middleweight slugger Nigel Benn and his manager, Ambrose Mendy, celebrate "The Dark Destroyer's" 1990 TKO of Doug DeWitt in Atlantic City. Benn defeated a number of first-rate American fighters on both sides of the Atlantic, including Iran Barkley and Gerald McClellan.

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TRINIDAD vs. JONES

You Can't Totally Write Off A Fight Between Future Hall Of Famers

By Don Stradley

Roy Jones and Felix Trinidad have signed to fight in January, reminding us once again that boxing is a lot like Broadway, where older stars still have clout. Like a couple of aging divas ready to entertain their loyal public, Jones and Trinidad have turned a deaf ear to critics who question the bout's importance.

"Tito is a great champion," said the 38-year-old Jones when the bout was announced. "And I know that he has left behind a great legacy. If someone like that comes to challenge you, how can you turn that down? I'd be stupid to turn that down. I fight for a living. That's what I do."

Trinidad concurred: "I always want to fight great fighters and I am coming back to fight Roy Jones because he is one of the greatest in the sport."

Some have suggested that a desperate Don King engineered

PHOTOS BY WILL HART-HBO

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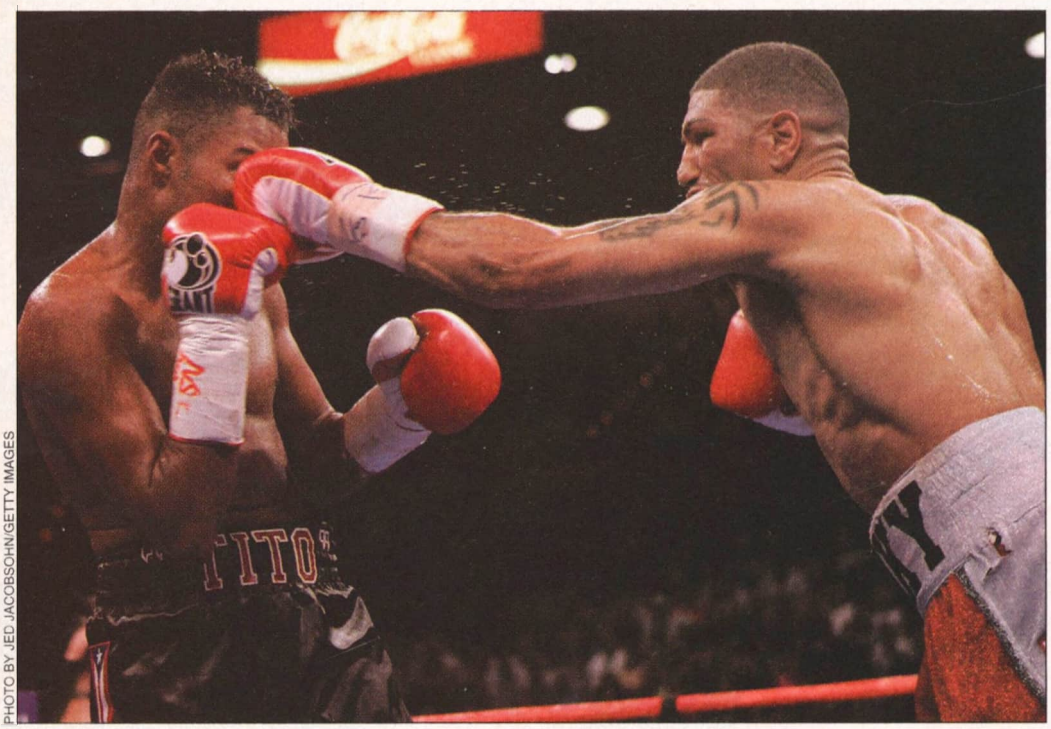

PHOTO BY JED JACOBSOHN/GETTY IMAGES

In their most recent bouts, Jones and Trinidad came out on the opposite ends of unanimous decisions. Jones (above) outpointed Anthony Hanshaw in July 2007, while Trinidad (below) lost virtually every round to Winky Wright in May 2005. Trinidad's record stands at 42-2 (35) , while Jones is 51-4 (38).

Trinidad's return, but Trinidad didn't need King to put a gun to his head. "It is true that I said in the past that I would not come out of retirement," said Trinidad, "but I have been a great fighter throughout my career and I am still healthy, and I know that I have too much boxing inside of me and I want to show the world that I am still one of the best boxers."

Trinidad wasn't likely to stay retired, not while so many of his past opponents, from Oscar De La Hoya to Bernard Hopkins to Fernando Vargas, are still active and making outrageous money. Meanwhile, King threw in some analogies to get us thinking about history.

"This is the first time since the 'Rumble In The Jungle' where you make the fight and we don't even have television," said King. "We don't have a dime nowhere committed to nobody. What we've got is a fight, and that means an attraction first. Now we have to go out and find the money for this attraction and make this attraction come off, because these two guys are fighting for pride and glory, as well as money."

The television dilemma hadn't been solved as of press time, but HBO was rumored to be interested. Jones' relationship with HBO is frosty since he was fired from his commentating job, so we'd be surprised to hear Jim Lampley calling this one. Then again, HBO is the most likely candidate, not wanting the competition to scoop them on what is, despite the age of the combatants, a big fight. There was also speculation that King wouldn't raise the funds to pay Jones and Trinidad—each will be seeking a ridiculous amount of money—but it's rare that a bout advances this far in the talking stage and doesn't come off. Even if he has to bankrupt a small country to do it, King will make this fight happen. Whether or not the fight is still relevant is open to debate.

"I would buy a PPV of Nicolay Valuev taking a crap before I'd pay for this raw sewage of a matchup," wrote Aileen W, a fan on the sweetscience.com's message board when the fight was announced. Other fans, when the bout was first announced, described it as an

PHOTOS BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Trinidad has retained much of his popularity, as was evident when Bernard Hopkins introduced the man he knocked out in 2001 to the crowd gathered at the MGM Grand for the Floyd Mayweather-Oscar De La Hoya weigh-in. Jones has also retained a loyal following, especially in Florida.

"atrocity" and "another PPV farce." But early Internet blather isn't always an accurate measure of what the general public is thinking. Gradually, there has been a buildup of genuine interest. The Doubting Thomases may be wrong when they say this fight is well past its expiration date.

There are three types of boxing fans: boxing junkies who'll watch anything, casual fans who are drawn in by hype, and fans of particular fighters. Jones-Trinidad will benefit from all three groups. The third group, in particular, may turn King's venture into a small success. Jones and Trinidad could test positive for tuberculosis and their fans would still support them. If the bout takes place in Madison Square Garden, as has been speculated, the grand old building will rock, especially for Trinidad with his Puerto Rican contingent. We just can't be certain the place will still be rocking 12 rounds later.

When this fight almost was signed five years ago, Jones probably would've whipped Trinidad. Now, with Jones at 38 and Trinidad at 34, the playing field seems more level. Roy isn't Superman anymore. He can be hit. Of course, Trinidad looked so awful in his last fight, a 2005 loss to Winky Wright, that it's tempting to say Trinidad is washed-up. All Trinidad has going for him is a left hook with two years of ring rust on it. Also, small-boned Trinidad may have difficulty bringing his power up to the agreed upon catchweight of 170. Then again, the naturally bigger Jones has to drop down to 170, which could leave the Floridian tired and drained. The fight may have been timelier in 2002, but it may be more competitive in 2008. Jones, for one, is predicting some heavy fire.

"You make a big fight and give the fans something to watch," said Jones. "It ain't gonna be like Mayweather-De La Hoya. They gave the fans a dance. We'll give them a fight. We are both powerful punchers. It's a matter of who gets there first. And it won't be like Bernard Hopkins-Winky Wright, two guys with no bombs in their tank. We got bombs in our tanks. You got two beautiful punchers, two beautiful boxers. It will be a great fight."

Where was this macho bombardier Jones back in 1999-2000 when we

were dozing off during his fights? Maybe knocking down Anthony Hanshaw last July awakened Jones' old self, the one with fast hands and a crazy love for roosters.

Jones is probably less excited about Trinidad's skill than he is about Trinidad's track record as a pay-per-view attraction—his 2005 bout with Wright notched more than 500,000 buys. If Trinidad's fans weren't too disgusted by his performance, there will probably be a similar number for a bout with Jones, who, despite being a future Hall of Famer, was never a pay-per-view star. Jones' recent fights with Hanshaw and Prince Ajamu proved he can't draw diddly on his own (Jones-Hanshaw drew about 24,000 buys). Jones needs Trinidad. Still, just the fact that Jones is in a fight like this one is a victory in itself, considering he spent much of 2004 being scraped off the canvas like a dead bird on Highway One.

"It's a fight made in boxing heaven," King hollered the day Jones and Trinidad appeared in his Deerfield Beach office to sign the contract. In a season of big money matchups involving many good fighters, King doesn't want to be left out. His Ricardo Mayorga-Vargas bout had garnered interest based on a certain slob appeal, but was postponed when Vargas went down with anemia. The rest of King's stable is mostly a ragtag group of unknown youngsters and unpredictable veterans. If Jones and Trinidad can rise to the occasion in January, they'll give King the hit he needs. But with all this talk about legacies, greatness, and money, what's really in it for the fighters?

A win for either man might lead them into another bout that should've happened years ago, a match with light heavyweight champion Hopkins. Both Jones and Trinidad have unfinished business with B-Hop; Trinidad was kayoed by Hopkins in 2002, and Jones won a dull decision over Hopkins during Bill Clinton's first term as President. But Trinidad's goal is probably more basic, in that he wants one last hurrah. A shutout loss to Wright is a terrible way to go out. A win over Jones, even the 2008 model, would be a nicer note to retire on.

As for Jones, he has gradually worked his way back to what we imagined he'd be at this point in his career. Forget the disastrous losses to Glen Johnson and Antonio Tarver; his performance against Hanshaw was basically what we thought Jones would be as an older fighter. He's settled down, he's throwing to the body, and he's pacing himself. He may sit along the ropes too much, but he has adapted to his age to become an efficient, rather than spectacular, fighter. But even if

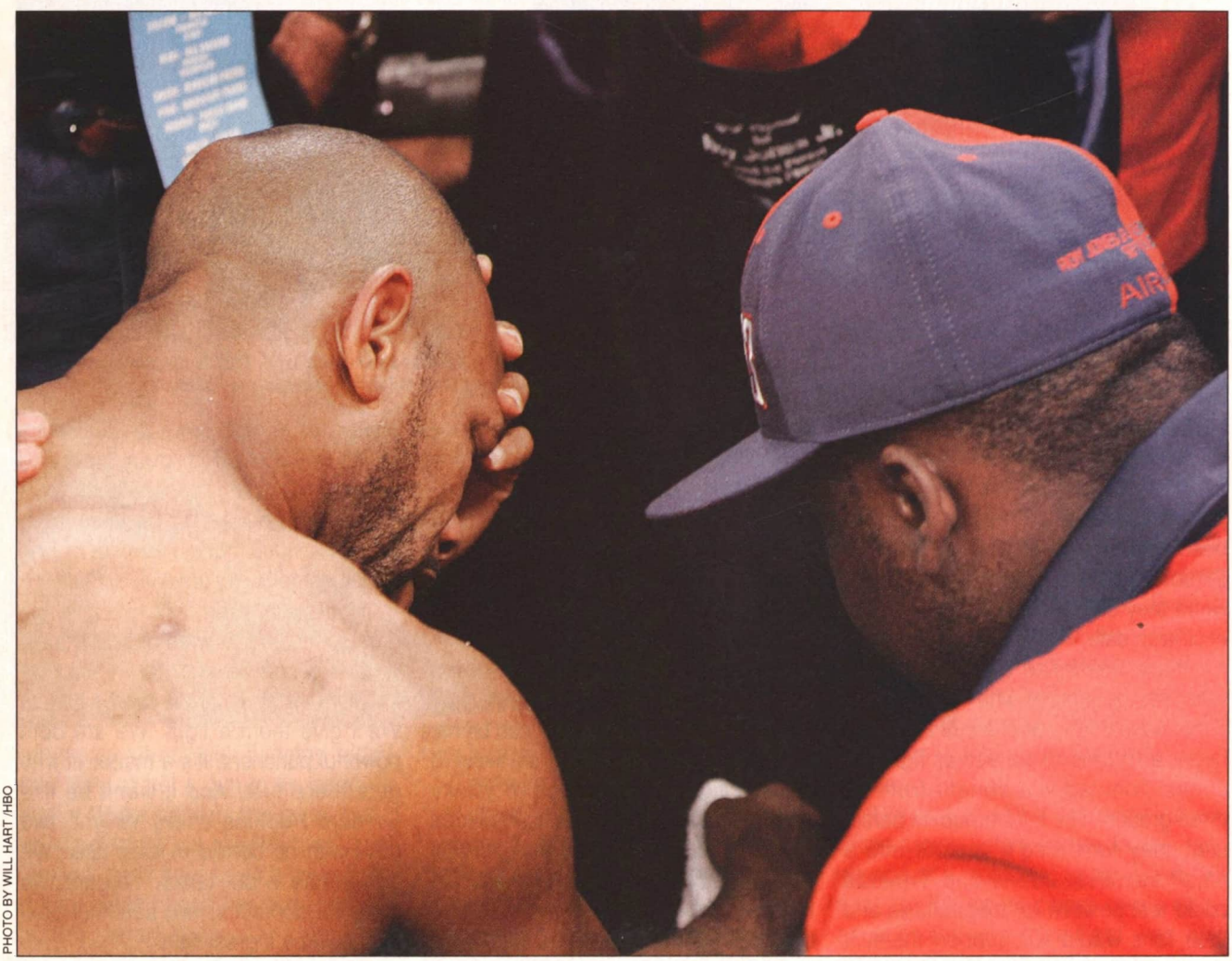

PHOTO BY WILL HART /HBO

Jones is consoled by members of his team following his knockout loss to Glen Johnson in September 2004. There was concern for Jones' health following back-to-back knockout losses to Antonio Tarver and Johnson, but that has faded since his wins over Prince Badi Ajamu and Hanshaw.

PHOTO BY HOLLY STEIN/GETTY IMAGES

It is not easy for an older fighter to earn respect in this game. Even after knocking out Michael Moorer for the heavyweight title at age 45, George Foreman still had to endure naysayers who claimed his unprecedented accomplishment was bad for the sport.

Jones looks good in beating Trinidad and lands a bout with Hopkins, there will still be people who complain that Jones is hanging around too long and that he's hogging the spotlight away from younger, more deserving fighters. This is nonsense.

During the 1960s, a well-past-40 Sugar Ray Robinson took fights with Terry Downs, Joey Giardello, and Joey Archer, but that didn't prevent Muhammad Ali from becoming a star. Conversely, Ali's extended career didn't stifle Ray Leonard's rise. Leonard also overstayed his welcome, but that didn't stop Mike Tyson from grabbing the spotlight, and Tyson's late career stench didn't prohibit the blossoming of De La Hoya. The notion that old fighters take away from young fighters is nothing more than ageism.

If 40-year-old Curt Schilling pitched a shutout in a World Series game, the press would hail it as a great moment in baseball. But older fighters are rarely given the same respect. When George Foreman, at 45, won the heavyweight title, some writers had the gall to ask if it was bad for boxing. Hopkins aside, writers treat older fighters as if they were the doddering old uncles who should act their age. Maybe older baseball players get a break because they wear uniforms, and a fighter's bare flesh is too much of a reminder of nature's hideous toll. Perhaps boxing observers, despite what they've been shown by boxing history, are still holding on to some primal belief that the world belongs to the young. A good performance by an older fighter counters everything we think we know about life, nature, and evolution. People hate to be proven wrong, especially by guys with gray hair on their chests.

Of course, the difference between Hopkins, Trinidad, and Jones is that Hopkins hasn't looked bad in a fight, whereas Jones and Trinidad have been shelled a couple of times apiece. In fact, does anyone remember the flood of rumors in 2003 that Tito was punch-drunk and slurring his words, or that he retired because of health reasons? Apparently, his mysterious health concerns mysteriously vanished, just like Jones' steroid scandal. To Jones' credit, he never really "retired." His critics wanted him to, but he never said the door was completely closed on his future.

Jones may like his new image as a grizzled ring general. After all, people appreciate things more when they have to work hard to achieve them. Jones may be in the same frame of mind Ali was in when The Greatest drifted for several years before regaining the title from Foreman. Standing on the banks overlooking the Zaire River, Ali told a reporter, "You'll never know how long I've waited for this. You'll never know how much this means to me."

Fighters take their youthful prowess for granted. When age diminishes them, they merely want another chance to enjoy their time at the top, this time with their eyes open. Author Stephen King once said the key to good fiction is the simple concept of "magic lost, and magic found."

Jones and Trinidad are simply trying to find the magic again. ■

Don Stradley is a freelance writer from Massachusetts and a regular contributor to THE RING.

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Ranking The Best Fighters In The World

By Eric Raskin

How many of us are among the best 100 in the world at what we do? Think about how good you'd have to be to be regarded as one of the 100 hundred best doctors, or even one of the 100 most outstanding trash collectors. If you're one of the 100 best lunch ladies in the world, imagine how exceptional that means you are at putting just the right amount of Sloppy Joe on the bun and keeping the line moving quickly.

Our best estimates suggest there are about 14,000 active professional male boxers in the world. To be ranked among the 100 best means you're in the top seven-tenths of a percent of people who do what you do. We're talking pretty elite company here. Making THE RING 100 is no joke. The fighter ranked at the bottom, number 100, is still better at his job than 99.3 percent of his peers. Can you say that about yourself?

For the first time in a long time, the same fighter has been ranked number one on this list for three years in a row. But as you move down the rankings from there, you see that nothing else in the boxing world has been anywhere near that stable. Thirty of the 100 names in last year's RING 100 are gone, replaced by 30 new names. Everything from death (Diego Corrales) to retirement (Erik Morales) to the erosion of will (Acelino Freitas) to the erosion of skill (James Toney) was responsible for removing regulars from the list. And even among those who made it in '06 and are back in '07, the movement was often dramatic; last year's 99 is this year's 18, and last year's 9 is this year's 97. But, hey, this is a sport where fortunes can change with one punch. Is it any surprise that fortunes can change so enormously over the course of 12 months, thousands of fights, and millions of punches?

As you look over the rankings, you may find that, in certain cases, a fighter ranked above another fighter in our monthly divisional rankings falls below that same fighter in this analysis. That's because the division-by-division ratings are based purely on merit, whereas the pound-for-pound ratings take into account a combination of achievement, perceived ability, and even perceived potential. So a semi-unproven fighter with a tantalizing upside may get the nod over a proven veteran whose limits have already been established.

So who comprises the top seven-tenths of a percent of the boxers in action today? Turn the pages and find out. As of our press deadline of September 16, these were the fight game's elite 100. For all but a handful of you readers, these guys are better at what they do than you are at what you do. So read on with envy, read on with admiration, and read on with respect.

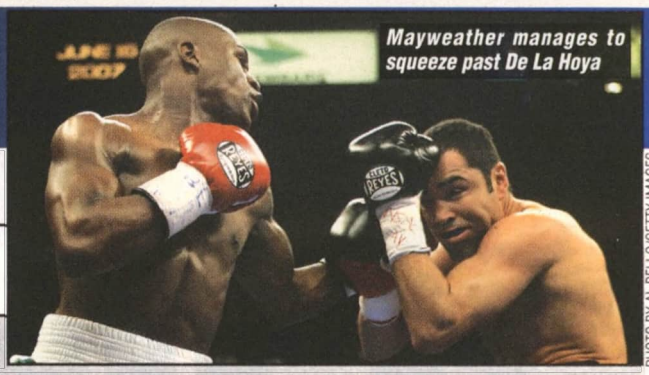

Mayweather manages to squeeze past De La Hoya

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

1 FLOYD **MAYWEATHER**
World Welterweight Champion 38-0 (24)

Last Year's Ranking: 1
Status Report: Boxing-wise, it was a good year for "Pretty Boy"; exposure-wise, it was an exceptional year. At age 30, finally made the leap to mainstream sports stardom with his scene-stealing performance on HBO's *24/7* documentary series, followed by his record-smashing PPV win over Oscar De La Hoya (W 12). Not Mayweather's most sterling showing, but still a victory over a future Hall of Famer at a higher weight. Prior to that, hurled a shutout against Carlos Baldomir (W 12) to claim the legitimate welterweight title.
Future: Retirement? What retirement? December 10 showdown with Ricky Hatton will likely add another big name to Mayweather's victim list.

2 MANNY **PACQUIAO** Junior Lightweight 44-3-2 (35)

Last Year's Ranking: 3
Status Report: The only fighter besides Mayweather with a reasonable claim to the top spot, "Pac-Man" doesn't come close to his P-4-P rival in terms of defense, but is almost certainly the best offensive fighter on the planet. That offense overwhelmed Erik Morales (KO 3) in November and bailed out an unfocused Pacquiao against previously unbeaten Jorge Solis (KO 8) in April.
Future: Looking to repeat greatest win of career in October 6 rematch with Marco Antonio Barrera. Even more dangerous than the legendary Barrera, however, are the outside-the-ring distractions the Filipino constantly faces.

3 JUAN MANUEL **MARQUEZ** WBC Super Featherweight Titleholder 47-3-1 (35)

Last Year's Ranking: 18
Status Report: Career-best win over Marco Antonio Barrera (W 12) in March allowed long-overlooked Mexican to put disputed loss to Chris John 12 months earlier behind him, and exciting ninth-round knockout of Jimrex Jaca in previous fight allowed fans to forget some of Marquez' past safety-first performances. And, of course, 2004 draw with Manny Pacquiao keeps looking better all the time. Incredibly, 51 fights into pro career, still hasn't suffered a clear-cut loss.
Future: Will have fought Rocky Juarez by the time you read this. The real money, however, is in a rematch with the Pacquiao-Barrera II winner.

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Hopkins was too smart and too big for Wright

4 BERNARD **HOPKINS**
World Light Heavyweight Champion 48-4-1 (32) with 1 no-contest

Last Year's Ranking: 5
Status Report: George Foreman was right; 40 is not a death sentence. At 42, "The Executioner" added another top fighter to his resume in July when he used his only-slightly-past-its-prime body and still-in-its-prime mind to wear down Winky Wright and win a close decision. And for those who say B-Hop is picking on fellow old-timers and wouldn't be able to handle a young fighter, just remember that a pretty decent young fighter named Jermain Taylor couldn't do to Wright what Hopkins did.
Future: Maybe the Calzaghe-Kessler winner, maybe the Jones-Trinidad winner. In the meantime, a rematch with 1997 kayo victim Glen Johnson might be interesting.

5 ISRAEL **VAZQUEZ** World Junior Featherweight Champion 42-4 (31)

Last Year's Ranking: 19
Status Report: Typically, a fighter should not climb 14 spots after a .500 year. But when it is one competitive loss to Rafael Marquez, followed by one scintillating knockout win over Marquez, exceptions are made. Going 1-for-2 against a fighter like Marquez proves that the California-based Mexican belongs among the elite. He's an all-action boxer-slugger who does his best work just when people start to count him out.
Future: Will have to wait for cuts over both eyes to heal, but a rubber match with Marquez in '08 is a near certainty.

2 MANNY PACQUIAO

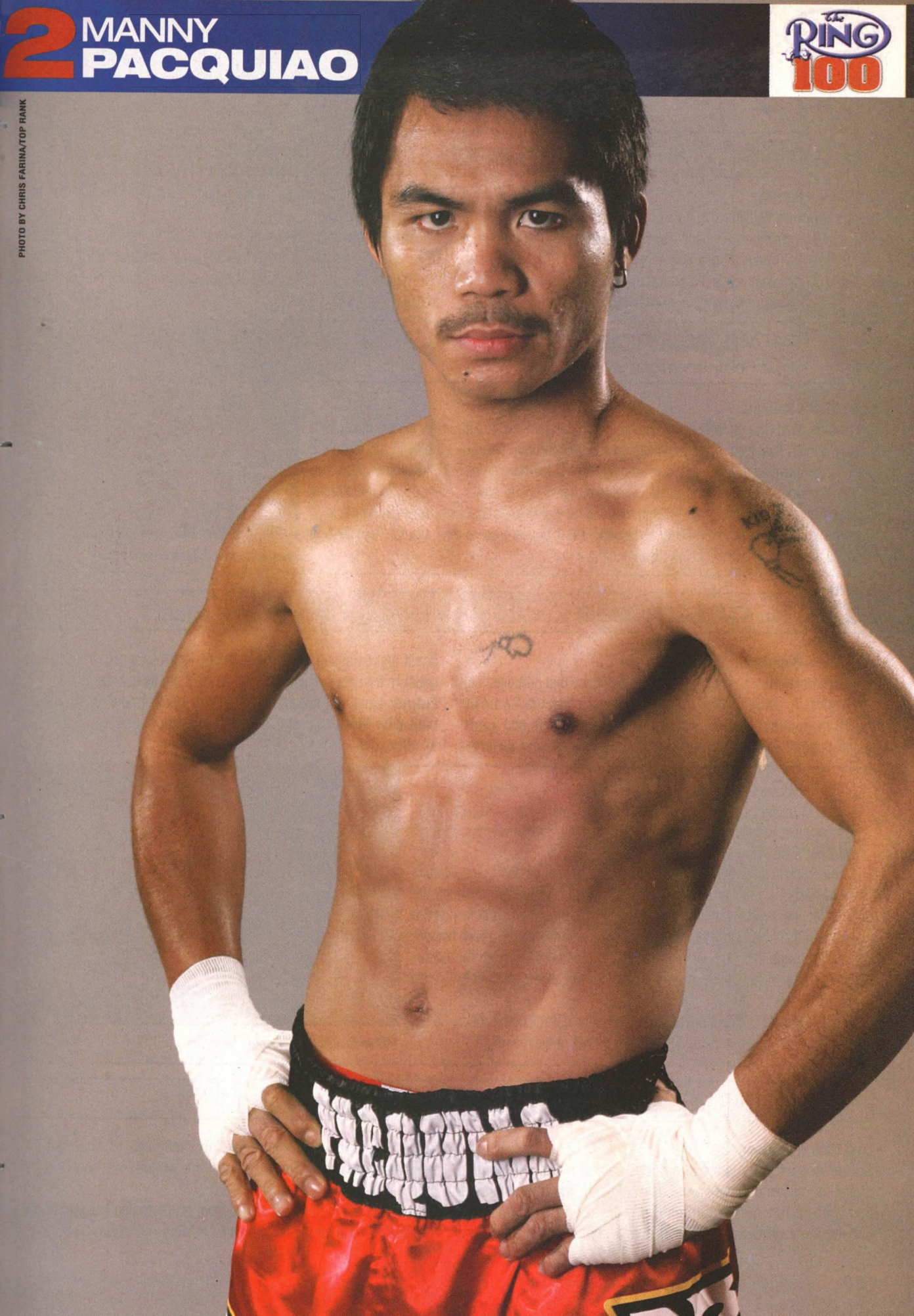


PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

6 WINKY **WRIGHT** Middleweight 51-4-1 (25)

Last Year's Ranking: 2
Status Report: Suffered a non-controversial loss for the first time in *13 years* when Bernard Hopkins decisioned him in July to retain the light heavyweight title—but because it's Hopkins and because Wright moved up 10 pounds above where he should be, his P-4-P ranking only takes a minor hit. The crafty 35-year-old lefty looked much better against the made-to-order Ike Quartey (W 12) in December.
Future: It's hard to say whether he's a fighter beginning to fade, or just didn't carry the extra weight well and was made to look bad by the genius of Hopkins. Either way, his future definitely lies at 160 pounds or below.

7 RAFAEL **MARQUEZ** Junior Featherweight 37-4 (33)

Last Year's Ranking: 7
Status Report: One up, one down, no change in his ranking. A supremely skilled boxer with heavy hands, Marquez' one weakness, an unreliable chin, nearly cost him in his first fight with Israel Vazquez (KO 7) and did ultimately let him down in the rematch (KO by 6). After ruling 118 pounds for more than three years with his crippling power, he needs to use his jab and box more against stronger 122-pounders if he wants to get back on the winning track.
Future: A rubber match with Vazquez in early-'08 is guaranteed to thrill, but the less thrilling it is, the better the chance of Marquez winning.

PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

Marquez spears Vazquez with a left

8 JOE **CALZAGHE** World Super Middleweight Champion 43-0 (32)

Last Year's Ranking: 10
Status Report: After a breakout win over Jeff Lacy that propelled him up 19 spots in last year's Ring 100, did little more than mark time the last 12 months with an ugly win over Sakio Bika (W 12) and a mismatch against Peter Manfredo (KO 3). Welsh southpaw deserves credit for remaining undefeated for 14 years as a pro, but deserves criticism for Lacy being the best opponent on his resume.
Future: Lacy will soon be his second-best opponent. November bout with Mikkel Kessler is one of the best possible matches in all of boxing.

9 RICKY **HATTON** World Junior Welterweight Champion 43-0 (31)

Last Year's Ranking: 8
Status Report: In theory, a fourth-round stoppage of Jose Luis Castillo should earn a fighter high accolades. But "The Hitman" got only partial credit for stopping Castillo with a bodypunch in June because Castillo looked so terribly shot. Still, there wasn't much to criticize about Hatton, except perhaps that he held too much. He also faced criticism for excessive holding in his dull January win over the one-dimensional Juan Urango (W 12).
Future: If Hatton wins his next fight, he'd better get full credit, because it's against pound-for-pound king Floyd Mayweather at welterweight.

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Hatton makes quick work of Castillo

10 MIGUEL **COTTO** WBA Welterweight Titleholder 30-0 (25)

Last Year's Ranking: 22
Status Report: After years of arduous pain to make 140 pounds, moved up to welterweight and has made sure that the only arduous pain is felt by his opponents. Too strong for previously unbeaten Carlos Quintana (KO 5), too everything for Oktay Urkal (KO 11), and too determined for Zab Judah (KO 11), has seen his popularity amongst Puerto Rican fans explode as he enters his prime at age 26.
Future: By far the biggest test of the '00 Olympian's career comes November 10 against Shane Mosley at Madison Square Garden.

10 MIGUEL COTTO

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

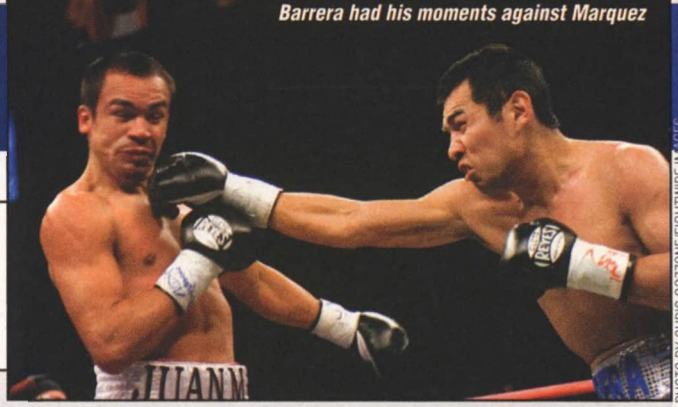

Barrera had his moments against Marquez

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

11 MARCO ANTONIO **BARRERA**

Junior Lightweight 63-5 (42) with 1 no-contest

Last Year's Ranking: 6

Status Report: The judges may have thought it was a one-sided fight, but March bout with Juan Manuel Marquez (L 12) was actually quite close, especially if you factor in a blown knockdown call by ref Jay Nady. At 33, Barrera can't quite overwhelm a good opponent like he used to and doesn't always have the stomach for a brawl like he used to, but even if he's slowed half a step, his astounding versatility allows him to beat all but the very best.

Future: Was to have faced Manny Pacquiao in a rematch just after our press deadline. Could be the Mexican icon's final fight, or it could represent a new beginning.

12 JERMAIN **TAYLOR** World Middleweight Champion 27-0-1 (17)

Last Year's Ranking: 4

Status Report: To see just the official results of the past year—W 12 Kassim Ouma, W 12 Cory Spinks—you might think it odd that "Bad Intentions" would slip all the way from the top five to outside the top 10. But if you saw those fights, you understand. Middleweight champ has lost his confidence, isn't sure who he is in the ring, and keeps going the distance with junior middleweights.

Future: Deserves credit for granting power-blasting Kelly Pavlik a shot. You'll know by the time you read this whether it was a terrible decision or a brilliant momentum reversal.

13 SHANE **MOSLEY**

Welterweight 44-4 (37) with 1 no-contest

Last Year's Ranking: 11

Status Report: Didn't do much to build on the momentum of two wins over Fernando Vargas, taking a seven-month hiatus before easily outboxing and outfighting Luis Collazo (W 12) in his only fight of the past 12 months. Gained more notice, in fact, for mimicking Floyd Mayweather in Oscar De La Hoya's training camp than he did for any official fights he engaged in.

Future: The low-activity year may just mean 36-year-old Sugar Shane will be that much more well-preserved for November crossroads showdown with Miguel Cotto.

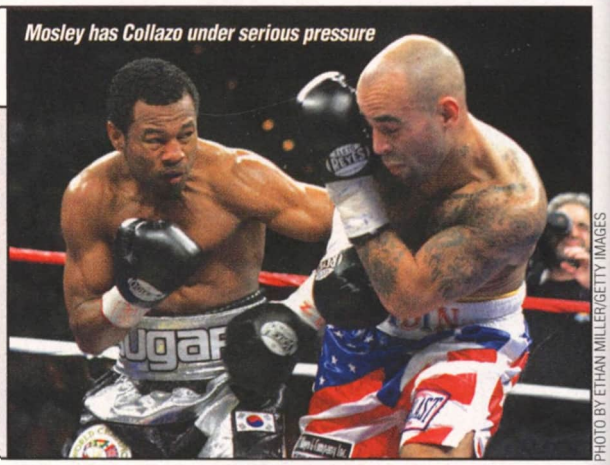

Mosley has Collazo under serious pressure

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

14 MIKKEL **KESSLER** WBA/WBC Super Middleweight Titleholder 39-0 (29)

Last Year's Ranking: 28

Status Report: First he gained a belt, then he gained valuable exposure. Dashing Dane destroyed Markus Beyer (KO 3) to unify two alphabet straps, then shut out Librado Andrade (W 12) in U.S. television debut. "The Viking Warrior" may just be the complete package, boasting marketability, power, and boxing skills.

Future: Joe Calzaghe will try to prove the package is incomplete when they meet November 3 on Calzaghe's home turf in arguably the most significant fight in the history of the 168-pound division. One man will leave with The Ring title and three alphabet belts, one will leave without the zero on the end of his record.

15 OSCAR **DE LA HOYA** Junior Middleweight 38-5 (30)

Last Year's Ranking: 15

Status Report: Guess we had "The Golden Boy" ranked correctly last year. He did just about what the number-15 fighter should do against the number-one fighter, losing competitively to Floyd Mayweather in May. When it comes to star power, however, Oscar is ranked number one, and nobody else comes close. Bout with Mayweather sold more than 2 million PPVs, breaking the all-time record.

Future: Once-a-year schedule looks likely to continue. Opponent for next May probably depends upon results of late-'07 bouts like Cotto-Mosley and Mayweather-Hatton.

15 OSCAR DE LA HOYA

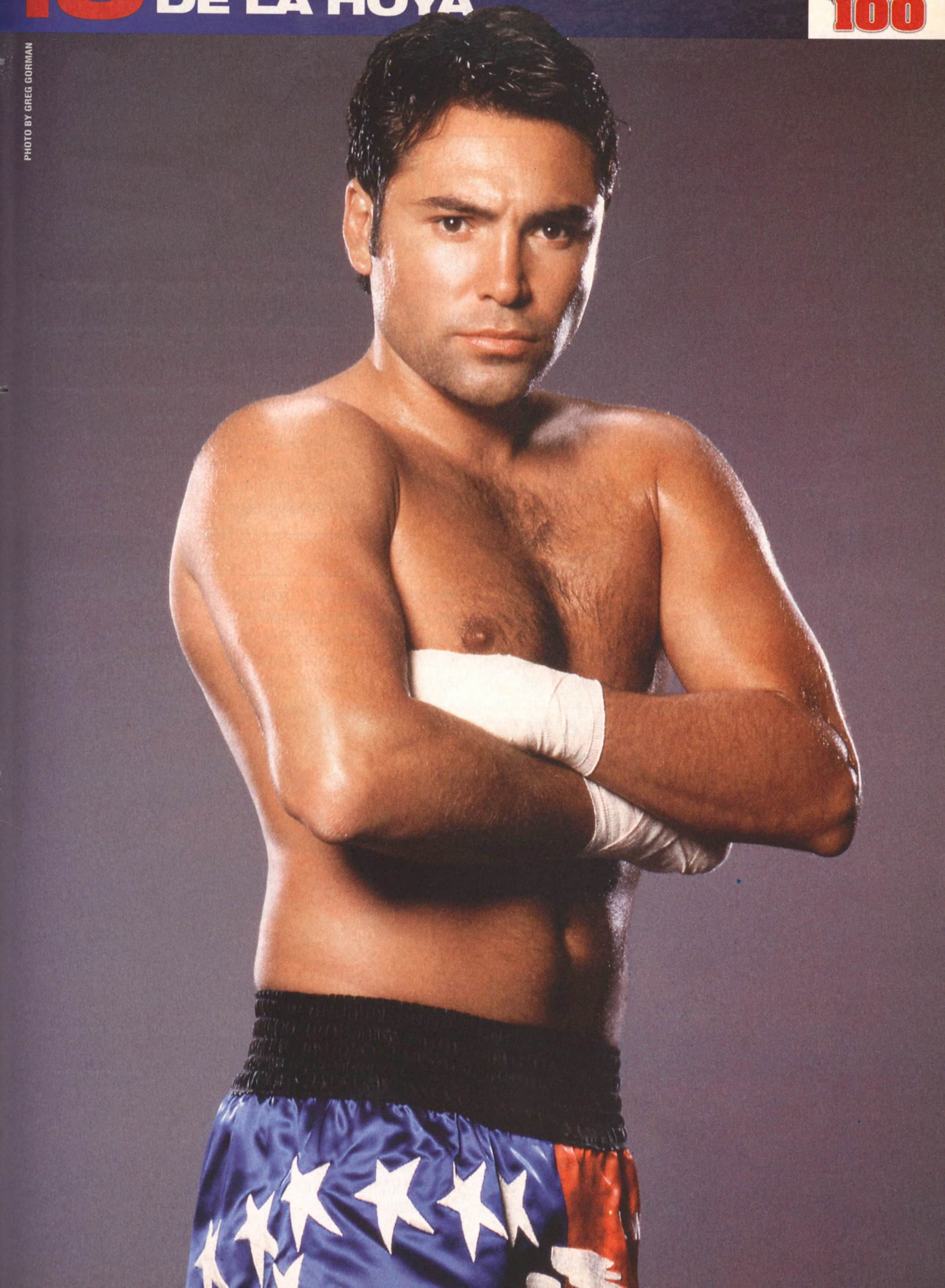


PHOTO BY GREG GORMAN

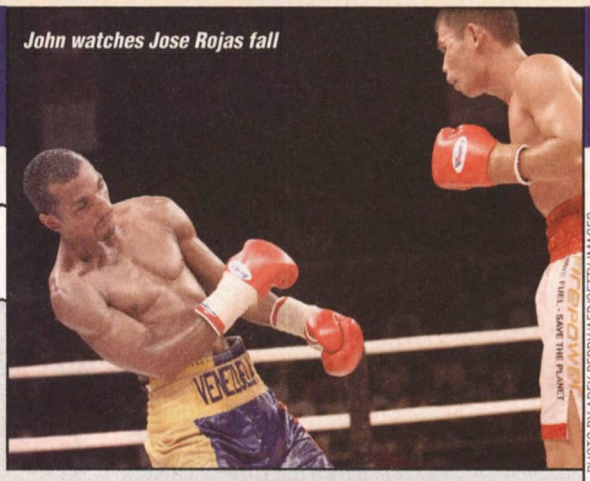

John watches Jose Rojas fall

PHOTO BY ADEK BERRY/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

16 CHRIS JOHN
WBA Featherweight Titleholder 40-0-1 (21)

Last Year's Ranking: 17
Status Report: Wins over Jose Rojas (W 12) and Zaiki Takemoto (KO 9) were fine record-padders, but the best result this year for the Indonesian "Dragon" was actually Juan Manuel Marquez' win over Marco Antonio Barrera. Considering John defeated Marquez (via disputed decision in Indonesia) in March '06, Marquez' ascension did a lot for John's reputation in North America, where he has yet to fight.
Future: There's talk from the John camp of wanting to make his U.S. debut soon. Unfortunately, there aren't any huge fights available to him in the 126-pound division.

17 JOEL CASAMAYOR World Lightweight Champion 34-3-1 (21)

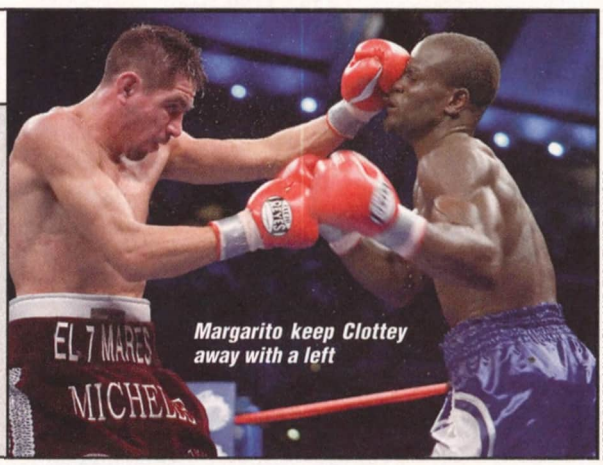
Last Year's Ranking: 20
Status Report: "El Cepillo" got the past year started right with a mild upset win over Diego Corrales (W 12) in October '06 to claim the recognized lightweight championship, but couldn't land a follow-up fight and has been withering on the vine since—not a good thing for a 36-year-old boxer.
Future: Recently signed with Golden Boy promotions, which should help get his career back on track. First up is a defense against Mexico's Jose Santa Cruz on the Shane Mosley-Miguel Cotto pay-per-view at Madison Square Garden on November 10.

18 PAUL WILLIAMS Welterweight 33-0 (24)

Last Year's Ranking: 99
Status Report: Made the instantaneous transformation from mega-prospect to championship contender by outworking the highly regarded Antonio Margarito and finishing strong in the final round to secure an entertaining and well-deserved points win in July. The extraordinarily lanky 6'2" southpaw also tallied an easy win over Santos Pakau (KO 6) last November.
Future: May inherit Margarito's mantle as the most avoided fighter in the division; if you were Mayweather, Mosley, or Cotto, would you take on Williams? Rematch with Margarito may be best option.

19 ANTONIO MARGARITO
Welterweight 34-5 (24) with 1 no-contest

Last Year's Ranking: 12
Status Report: Everything was falling into place: "The Tijuana Tornado" gutted out a tough win over Joshua Clottey (W 12) on a December '06 card he shared with Miguel Cotto designed to build toward a June '07 clash with the Puerto Rican … then Margarito inexplicably passed on the Cotto fight and took less money to lose his WBO belt to Paul Williams (L 12). Fought well against Williams, but just dug himself too large of a hole with his slow start.
Future: A meeting with Zab Judah in a must-win battle of high-profile recent losers is being considered.



Margarito keep Clottey away with a left

PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

20 IVAN CALDERON World Junior Flyweight Champion 29-0 (6)

Last Year's Ranking: 43
Status Report: After years of outclassing unknowns and washed-up ex-titleholders, "Iron Boy" finally stepped up against a prime, world-class opponent and dominated Hugo Cazares with his skills early and survived danger late to win a split decision and the 108-pound world title. An excellent win made more impressive by the fact that the Puerto Rican was fighting in a new weight class. Prior to that, scored an easy win over Jose Luis Verala (W 12) and a close one over Ronald Barrera (W 12).
Future: Either a rematch with Cazares or a bout with Ulises Solis would be interesting—but Calderon's entitled to an easy first defense if he prefers.

19 JOEL CASAMAYOR

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Diaz sends Frietas into the ropes with a left

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

21 JUAN DIAZ
WBA Lightweight Titleholder 32-0 (16)

Last Year's Ranking: 33
Status Report: Few boxers improve from fight to fight as consistently as "The Baby Bull" has. After a lopsided win over little-known Fernando Angulo (W 12) in November '06, stepped up in his biggest fight and overwhelmed two-division former titlist Acelino Freitas in April, using his relentless pressure to coerce a surrender after the eighth round. All in all, a fine first year working with Don King, though we'd like to see him fight more often.
Future: Was slated for another major test shortly after this issue's press deadline, against Julio Diaz. Win or lose, he's just 24 and the future looks bright.

22 VERNON FORREST
WBC Super Welterweight Titleholder 39-2 (28) with 1 no-contest

Last Year's Ranking: 41
Status Report: Maybe he just had the perfect opponent in front of him, but in a battle of former world welterweight champions, Forrest looked like his old self against Carlos Baldomir (W 12), boxing intelligently and punching with authority. It was the 36-year-old's best performance in five years, since he shocked Shane Mosley for the 147-pound title.
Future: Unfortunately, Forrest isn't a particularly exciting fighter, and neither are the other beltholders at 154, Cory Spinks and Joachim Alcine. Winky Wright has been mentioned, and while he's no Arturo Gatti, it may be the best alternative. There's also been talk of a move up to 160 pounds.

23 KELLY PAVLIK
Middleweight 31-0 (28)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: A 6'2½" middleweight who can punch like Tommy Hearns and appears to have a better chin? Yeah, we're giving "The Ghost" extra ratings points for potential. He still has a fair amount to prove—his only top-10 foe among his first 31 opponents was Edison Miranda, whom Pavlik obliterated in seven stirring, brutal rounds. But from what we've seen so far, we think he might be special.
Future: You'll know a lot more about whether he's special by the time you read this, as middleweight title challenge against Jermain Taylor was scheduled for September 29.

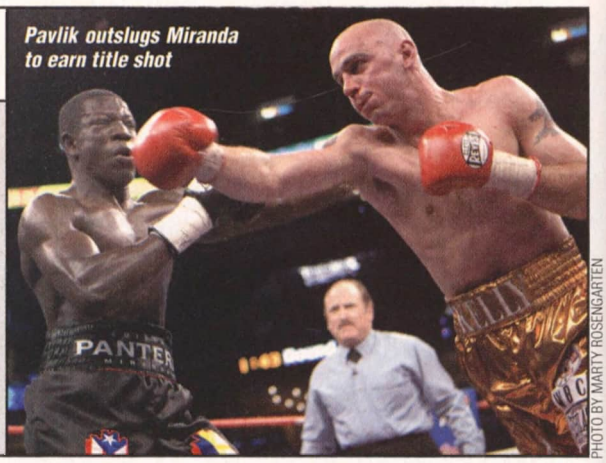

Pavlik outslugs Miranda to earn title shot

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

24 ARTHUR ABRAHAM IBF Middleweight Titleholder 24-0 (19)

Last Year's Ranking: 65
Status Report: Germany-based Armenian continued climb with three more wins—a controversial bout with Edison Miranda in which "King Arthur" toughed out a broken jaw to win on points, a quick destruction of previously unbeaten Sebastien Demers (KO 3), and an entertaining beatdown of Khoren Gevor (KO 11). Has kept a very busy schedule aside from taking an eight-month layoff for jaw to heal.
Future: Bout with Felix Sturm would be huge in Germany, and a win would establish Abraham as the most deserving challenger to the Jermain Taylor-Kelly Pavlik winner.

25 CORY SPINKS IBF Junior Middleweight Titleholder 36-4 (11)

Last Year's Ranking: 29
Status Report: After a dreadfully dull shutout decision win over Rodney Jones in February, jumped at the opportunity to add six pounds and try to upset Jermain Taylor for the world middleweight title. Came damned close, losing a split decision—in another almost unwatchable fight. But the pound-for-pound rankings aren't about entertainment, and when it comes to skill, St. Louis lefty has proven he can hang with the elite.
Future: Awkward style and lack of offense mean the major networks can do without him. Best bet is probably to fight in St. Louis, where he can draw enough of a live gate to make fighting on ESPN2 or Versus financially viable.

24 ARTHUR ABRAHAM

PHOTO BY MARTIN ROSE/GETTY IMAGES

26 HUMBERTO **SOTO** Junior Lightweight 43-5-2 (27) with 1 no-contest

Last Year's Ranking: 32
Status Report: Original conqueror of Rocky Juarez kept busy with a pair of eye-catching wins over solid but unspectacular opponents, Humberto Toledo (KO 3) and Bobby Pacquiao (KO 7). Is on a five-year, 20-fight unbeaten streak since a slow start to a career that began at age 17.
Future: Lost out on Manny Pacquiao fight when Marco Antonio Barrera became available, and had to watch Juan Manuel Marquez fight go to relatively undeserving Juarez, but still gets a big bout of his own in November against Joan Guzman.

27 JOAN **GUZMAN** Junior Lightweight 27-0 (17)

Last Year's Ranking: 52
Status Report: Highly skillful Dominican continues to make the "Little Tyson" nickname seem inappropriate—he hasn't scored a knockout in six fights—but he just keeps winning, and comfortably. Made his first defense of WBO 130-pound belt a successful one by winning 11 of 12 rounds against Antonio Davis in December. His biggest problem—and this has been the case throughout most of his career—is that he just doesn't fight enough.
Future: Facing probably his toughest opponent to date on November 17 when he meets Humberto Soto on HBO. Looks like a great *Boxing After Dark* bout between evenly matched contenders.

28 MARTIN **CASTILLO** Junior Bantamweight 32-2 (17)

Last Year's Ranking: 38
Status Report: "El Gallo" had a perfectly solid year—a fifth-round knockout of hapless trialhorse Jorge Romero and a lopsided 10-round decision win over veteran Oscar Andrade—but his climb in The Ring 100 is mainly owed to the strong comeback year enjoyed by Alexander Munoz, a fighter whose only two losses have come against Castillo.
Future: There was talk as of press time of a possible November bout with Jorge Arce. Should be interesting to see if the ring-wise Castillo can do what Cristian Mijares did and further expose Arce's limitations.

29 HOZUMI **HASEGAWA** WBC Bantamweight Titleholder 22-2 (7)

Last Year's Ranking: 39
Status Report: Tallied third and fourth successful alphabet title defenses, both quality wins that proved the Japanese fighter's twin victories over Veerapol Sahaprom were no fluke. Ended Genaro Garcia's eight-fight winning streak by unanimous decision, then spoiled the undefeated record of Simpiwe Vetyeka, also on points. Lacks kayo power, but skill and southpaw style make up for it.
Future: Facing another reasonable challenger in December, Italian Simone Maludrotu, who comes in on a 20-fight winning streak.

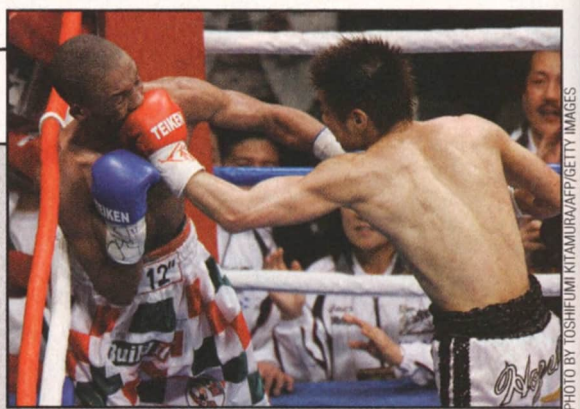


PHOTO BY TOSHIFUMI KITAMURA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Hasegawa drives a left into Vetyeka's face

30 ALEXANDER **MUNOZ** WBA Super Flyweight Titleholder 30-2 (27)

Last Year's Ranking: 69
Status Report: After a totally pointless win over Luis Trejo (who was 0-9 at the time), regained alphabet belt he'd lost to Martin Castillo in '04 by handily decisioning Castillo's conqueror, Nobuo Nashiro, on Nashiro's home turf in Tokyo in May. Simply wanted it more than Nashiro and worked harder, using a busy attack to reclaim the belt.
Future: Scheduled for a soft-looking defense in Tokyo just after our press deadline against anonymous Kuniyuki Aizawa. If Munoz and Castillo keep winning, a third fight between them would crown a Ring champion.

Munoz fires a right at Nashiro en route to decision

PHOTO BY TOSHIFUMI KITAMURA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

26 HUMBERTO SOTO

PHOTO BY NICK LAHAM/GETTY IMAGES

31 CRISTIAN **MIJARES** WBC Super Flyweight Titleholder 32-3-2 (13)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Mexican southpaw was as anonymous as they come a year ago, but has had an extraordinary past 12 months and stamped himself as a potential superstar in the making. Busy year included wins over former beltholder Katsushige Kawashima (W 12), Reynaldo Lopez (W 12), Kawashima again (KO 10), Jorge Arce (W 12), and Teppei Kikui (KO 10). Near-shutout of the highly regarded Arce was the real attention grabber, even though it was on a small pay-per-view, reaching a limited audience.
Future: October defense against Franck Gorjux looks like a walkover.

32 NONITO **DONAIRE** IBF Flyweight Titleholder 18-1 (11)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Scored perhaps the biggest stunner of '07 when a picture-perfect left hook collapsed Vic Darchinyan (KO 5), avenging a one-sided loss suffered nine months earlier by brother Glenn Donaire. And it was more than just a one-punch kayo; "The Filipino Flash" was outboxing the previously unbeaten Aussie from the start. Prior to that, Donaire scored a good win over Oscar Andrade (W 12) and a worthless win over sub-.500 Kevin Hudgins (KO 1).
Future: Darchinyan wants a rematch, and Donaire seems willing, though he's indicated he wants to squeeze in another defense first.

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN
Donaire kayos Darchinyan in huge upset

33 DAISUKE **NAITO** WBC Flyweight Titleholder 31-2-2 (20)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: The high-priced Red Sox pitcher isn't the only Daisuke making waves in the sporting world. After two previous failed attempts, Naito amazingly ended Pongsaklek Wonjongkam's 11-year, 56-fight winning streak on a narrow but unanimous decision in July. The 32-year-old Japanese beltholder's only pro losses have come against the long-reigning Pongsaklek, and one of his two draws came against the excellent Takefumi Sakata.
Future: Around the time you read this, will be facing 10-0 Daiki Kameda in a major Japanese event. If Naito wins, a rematch with Sakata or a fourth fight with Pongsaklek would be logical.

34 PONGSAKLEK **WONJONGKAM** Flyweight 65-3 (34)

Last Year's Ranking: 14
Status Report: Nothing lasts forever … but the Thai southpaw's alphabet title reign came close. Wins over Monelisi Myekeni (W 12) and Tomonobu Shimizu (KO 7), sandwiched around a non-title bout with Lito Sisnorio (KO 4), extended his streak of successful defenses to 17 in a six-year reign, but it ended in July when Daisuke Naito surprisingly outmaneuvered him and survived a ninth-round rally to win a unanimous decision. Pongsaklek failed to make weight on his initial attempt, suggesting questionable preparation.
Future: Only 30 years old, this close loss doesn't mean the end. After 17 defenses, certainly deserves a chance to get his belt back.

Wonjongkam has Shimizu ready to go

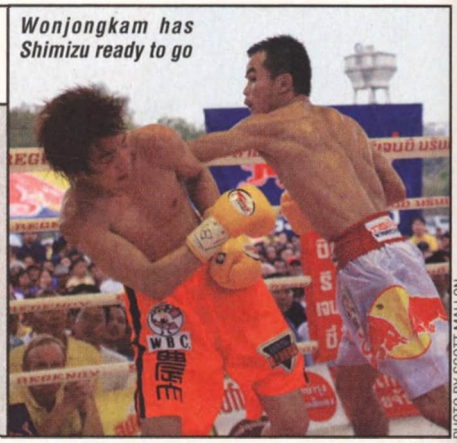


PHOTO BY SCOTT MALLON

35 JULIO **DIAZ** IBF Lightweight Titleholder 34-3 (25)

Last Year's Ranking: 46
Status Report: Only one fight for "The Kidd" since last year's rankings, but it was probably the best result of his career, a third-round stoppage of Jesus Chavez in what looked like a 50-50 fight coming in. It ended on a knee injury to Chavez, but Diaz was outboxing him in every way imaginable to that point. Seems like he's been around a while, but Diaz is only 27 and in his prime. When he uses his jab, he's a tough out for any 135-pounder.
Future: October meeting with another Diaz, Juan, will largely determine the direction of his career.

31 CRISTIAN MIJARES

PHOTO BY RONALDO SCHEMIDT/GETTY IMAGES

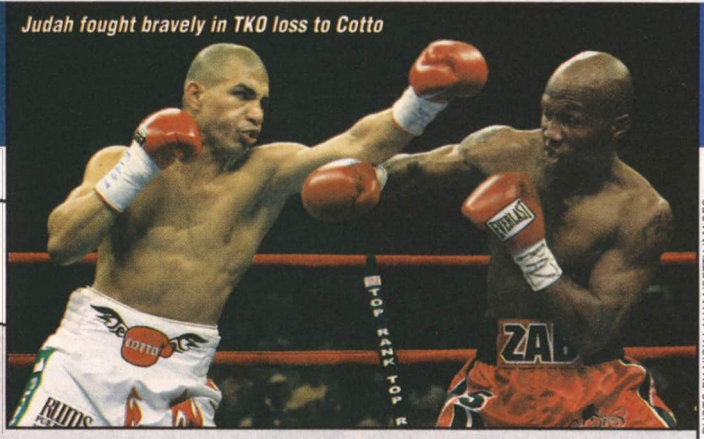

Judah fought bravely in TKO loss to Cotto

PHOTO BY NICK LAHAM/GETTY IMAGES

36 ZAB **JUDAH**
Welterweight 35-5 (25) with 2 no-contests

Last Year's Ranking: 27
Status Report: Though June loss to Miguel Cotto (KO by 11) extended winless streak to four (previous fight was a one-round April no-contest against Ruben Galvan), it was certainly the Brooklyn speedster's best loss, a stirring Fight of the Year contender that saw Judah acquire new fans with his gallant stand. Hurt Cotto a few times early, but as is frequently the case, fizzled out as the rounds wore on. Bounced back with a get-well win over Edwin Vazquez (W 10) in September.
Future: There's talk of a bout with Antonio Margarito. Judah would probably be the 'dog, but, of course, he'd be dangerous early.

37 JUNIOR **WITTER** WBC Super Lightweight Titleholder 36-1-2 (21)

Last Year's Ranking: 56
Status Report: Fast, awkward, hard-hitting Brit scored probably the biggest and best win of his career in September when he dropped dangerous Vivian Harris in the fourth round and then knocked him out in the seventh. Prior to that, tallied an insignificant victory in January over Arturo Morua (KO 9). Has won 21 straight, 17 by kayo, since loss to Zab Judah seven years ago.
Future: Unfortunately, win over Harris probably gave Ricky Hatton more reason to keep away from Witter. A fight with Gavin Rees would be his next best bet for attracting a crowd in England.

38 ROMAN **KARMAZIN** Junior Middleweight 35-2-1 (22) with 1 no-contest

Last Year's Ranking: 30
Status Report: Pretty much a wasted year for the awkwardly skillful Russian veteran, with just one fight, an off-TV win over journeymsn James Obede Toney (KO 4). Was supposed to fight again on Fernando Vargas-Ricardo Mayorga undercard in September, but the whole card was canceled. "Made In Hell" has really been stuck on a treadmill since career-defining win over Kassim Ouma in July '05.
Future: Deserves a rematch with Cory Spinks, to whom he lost on a majority decision in '06. Neither guy has any better options, and it was a decent fight the first time, at least by Spinks' standards.

39 TAKEFUMI **SAKATA** WBA Flyweight Titleholder 31-4-1 (15)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Just because he's Japanese, only 112 pounds, and you don't know anything about him, that doesn't mean he isn't a serious Fighter of the Year contender. In December '06, lost a split decision to the excellent Roberto Vasquez, then shocked Lorenzo Parra (KO 3) in March for 112-pound belt and upset Vasquez (W 12) in July in first defense. Not just two big wins, but two big wins over men who'd already defeated him.
Future: Lots of options—Vasquez again, Parra again, unification bout with Daisuke Naito. Whomever he chooses, look for him to stay in Tokyo, where all but one of his fights have been.

40 CHAD **DAWSON**
WBC Light Heavyweight Titleholder 24-0 (16) with 1 no-contest

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: "Bad Chad" confirmed that the potential he showed against lesser opponents was no mirage when he took on unbeaten and highly regarded Tomasz Adamek in February and posted a dominant decision win (save for a scary knockdown suffered late). Followed with a cushy first defense against Jesus Ruiz (KO 6). Has speed, power, height and reach, youth (25), and a southpaw stance. If he can shore up those occasional defensive lapses, may represent the future at 175 pounds.
Future: Will have taken on ferocious Adrian Diaconu in a key fight on Showtime by the time you read this.

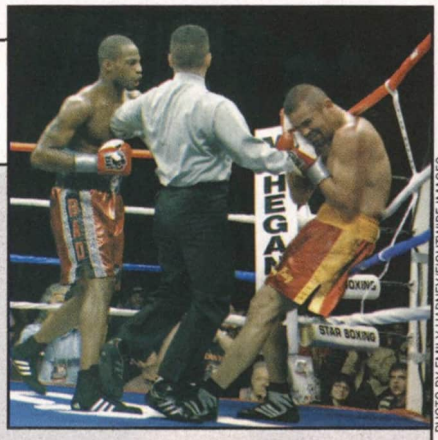

Dawson had no trouble disposing of Ruiz

PHOTO BY EMILY HARNEY/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

38 TAKEFUMI SAKATA

PHOTO BY KOICHI KAMASHIDA/GETTY IMAGES

41 HUGO **CAZARES** Junior Flyweight 25-4-1 (19)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Broke out in September '06 with an eye-catching beatdown of Nelson Dieppa (KO 10) to claim the vacant 108-pound world title, made a spectacular first defense against Wilfrido Valdez (KO 2), but came up short against crafty mover Ivan Calderon (L 12) in second defense. Took too long to figure the smaller, faster man out, and after getting on track and flooring him in the eighth, couldn't finish the job and came up a few points short.
Future: Certainly worthy of a rematch with Calderon—if he can still make 108 pounds.

42 NOBUO **NASHIRO** Junior Bantamweight 9-1 (5)

Last Year's Ranking: 37
Status Report: After winning an alphabet title in only his eighth pro fight by upsetting the classy Martin Castillo, was given the classic gimme first defense against Eduardo Garcia (W 12), then took on a real opponent in his second defense and got outhustled by Alexander Munoz (L 12). Hard to say how good he really is after going 1-1 against Castillo and Munoz, and at just 25 years old, hard to say how good the Japanese fighter can be.
Future: Probably wouldn't be a bad idea to get a little more experience against B-level opposition before pushing for another title shot.

PHOTO BY TOSHIFUMI KITAMURA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Nashiro tries to hold off Munoz

43 ZSOLT **ERDEI** Light Heavyweight 27-0 (17)

Last Year's Ranking: 49
Status Report: Germany-based Hungarian gets points for consistency, having now extended his WBO title reign to eight successful defenses, but not for much else. Two fights since last year's RING 100, both against American challengers who are all but unknown in the States, Danny Santiago (KO 8) and George Blades (KO 11). On the plus side, Erdei, who's more of a boxer than a puncher, did knock both of them out.
Future: Anyone having Sven Ottke flashbacks? He can reign forever facing guys like Blades and Santiago in the cozy confines of Germany, or he can start trying to prove he's the best. Don't hold your breath waiting for the latter.

44 ANTONIO **TARVER** Light Heavyweight 25-4 (18)

Last Year's Ranking: 26
Status Report: Had a fine year outside the ring, showing passable acting chops in *Rocky Balboa*, but was neither active nor impressive inside the ring, so his steady fall down THE RING 100 (15 spots last year, 17 this year) continues. Only fought once, sneaking past mediocre Elvir Muriqi on a majority decision in June, looking every day of his 38 years.
Future: Passed on a reported $2.1-million to fight Chad Dawson, which probably means he suspects, as we do, that the younger Dawson would pose major problems.

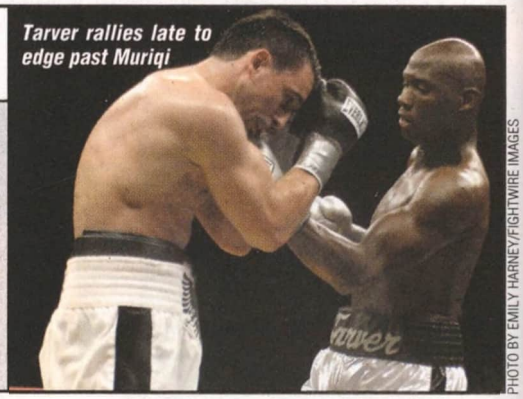


PHOTO BY EMILY HARNEY/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Tarver rallies late to edge past Muriqi

45 CLINTON **WOODS** IBF Light Heavyweight Titleholder 40-3-1 (24)

Last Year's Ranking: 50
Status Report: It was a frustrating year for the 35-year-old Brit, who had elbow problems, and since upsetting Glen Johnson in September '06 just prior to last year's RING 100 deadline, hasn't fought at all. But as long as Johnson keeps winning, looking good, and rising slightly in the rankings, Woods rises with him.
Future: Will have gotten back into action by the time you read this, making a mandatory defense against solid vet Julio Gonzalez, a fighter he decisioned in 2005.

43 ZSOLT ERDEI

PHOTO BY CHRISTOF KOEPSEL/BOMGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

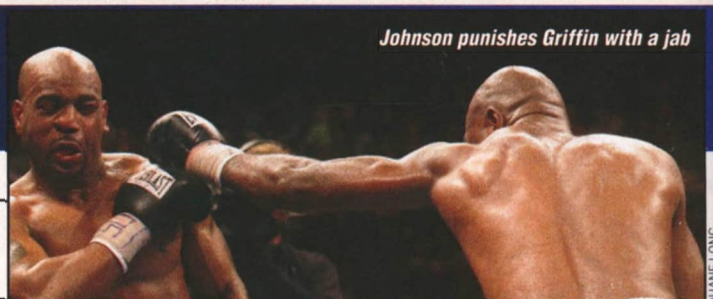

Johnson punishes Griffin with a jab

PHOTO BY DUANE LONG

46 GLEN **JOHNSON**
Light Heavyweight 46-11-2 (31)

Last Year's Ranking: 51
Status Report: "The Road Warrior" decided to stay at home in the Miami area and bounced back nicely from a debatable decision loss to Clinton Woods with a pair of knockout wins. Scored a meaningful victory over still-competent Montell Griffin (KO 11) in May, then easily handled journeyman Fred Moore (KO 5) in July. At 38, still a fighter most would rather avoid.
Future: Waiting on the Woods-Julio Gonzalez winner, but that won't lead him anywhere all that lucrative. Maybe if Bernard Hopkins can't land an A-list opponent, the time would be right for a rematch with Johnson.

47 ULISES **SOLIS**
IBF Light Flyweight Titleholder 25-1-2 (19)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Made the leap from tiny titlist nobody cares about to tiny titlist that the hardcore fans have taken notice of with a trio of impressive defenses. Stomped the man he won the title from, Will Grigsby (KO 8) in a January rematch, dominated faded former strawweight beltholder Jose Antonio Aguirre (KO 9) in May, and scored a Knockout of the Year contender in a back-and-forth battle with explosive Rodel Mayol (KO 8) in August. Only loss remains a disputed 2004 decision to Nelson Dieppa.
Future: At the front of the line for a shot at new junior fly champ Ivan Calderon.

Solis fires a right at Mayol

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

48 JEAN-MARC **MORMECK** World Cruiserweight Champion 33-3 (22)

Last Year's Ranking: 84
Status Report: After suffering the most painful loss of his career, an exhaustion-related 10th-round kayo to O'Neil Bell in January '06 that cost him the world title, Frenchman rebounded and got his revenge via close, unanimous decision in the March '07 rematch. Fought tremendously for the first eight thrilling rounds—then took advantage of the WBC's counterproductive open scoring experiment and sat on his lead while producing minimal offense the last few rounds.
Future: November 10 defense against David Haye pits Mormeck against another big banger with stamina concerns.

49 O'NEIL **BELL** Cruiserweight 26-2-1 (24)

Last Year's Ranking: 40
Status Report: That wasn't the world championship reign he was hoping for. It took Bell 14 months to make a defense (by which time he had, of course, been stripped by one alphabet group), and when he did, he lost on a razor-thin unanimous decision to Jean-Marc Mormeck. Strange times followed, including "Supernova" being accused of throwing a hatchet at a sparmate, then dropping out of a scheduled fight because nobody could find him.
Future: Resurfacing and getting back into the gym would be a start. Assuming he shows some stability, deserves a rubber match with Mormeck, possibly back in the U.S.

50 EDWIN **VALERO** WBA Super Featherweight Titleholder 22-0 (22)

Last Year's Ranking: 57
Status Report: First two defenses of alphabet belt ended the same way as previous 20 fights—with the Venezuelan scoring a knockout. Needed only 72 seconds to crush Michael Lozada in January, and then got rid of Nobuhito Honmo in eight rounds in May. Living and fighting in Tokyo, and as of now can't get licensed to fight in the U.S. because of a negative brain scan.
Future: Talk of a possible fight with Manny Pacquiao in Macau at some point; otherwise, raw puncher will have trouble taking career to next level if he can't fight in the States.

48 JEAN-MARC MORMECK

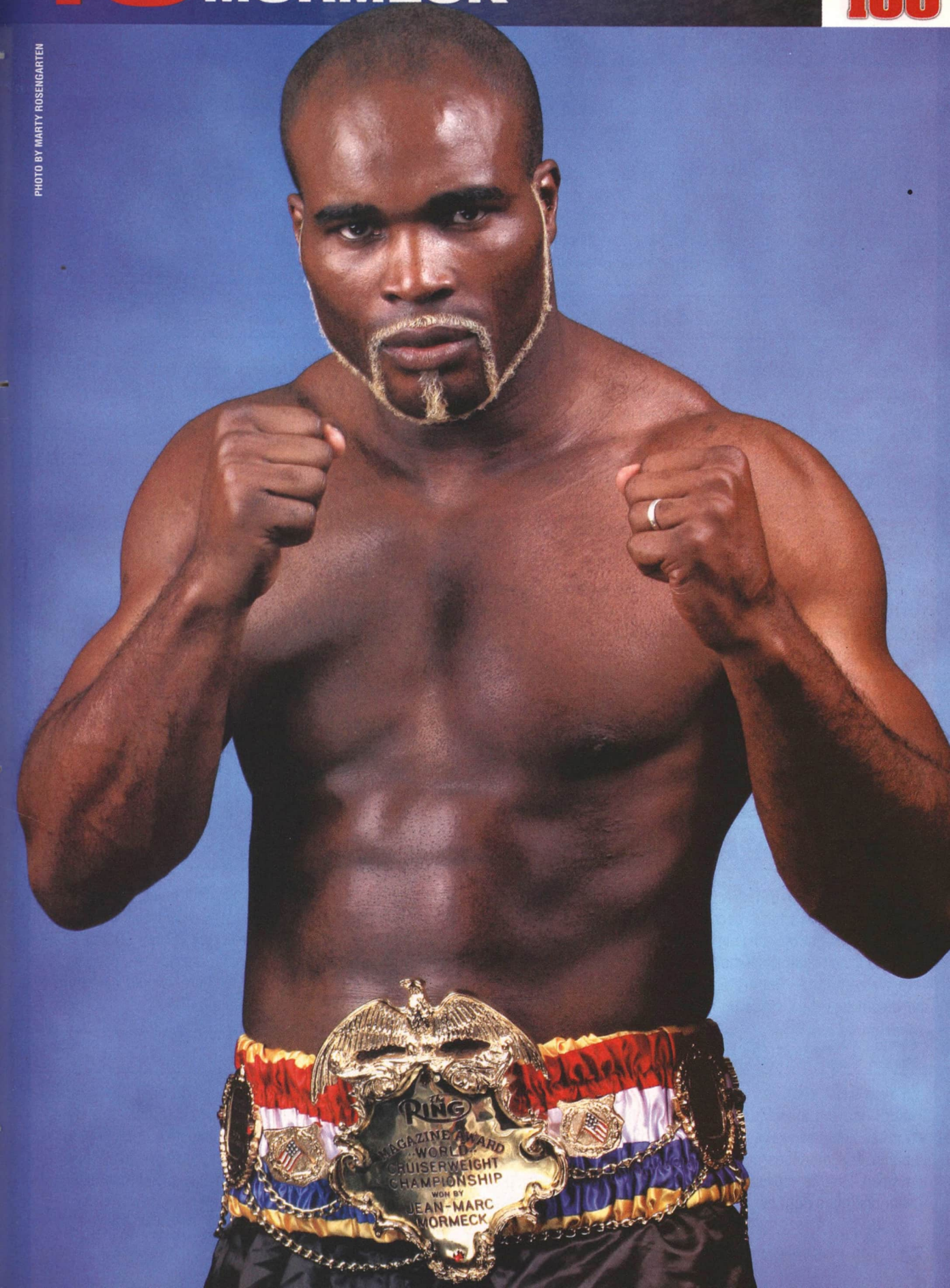


PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

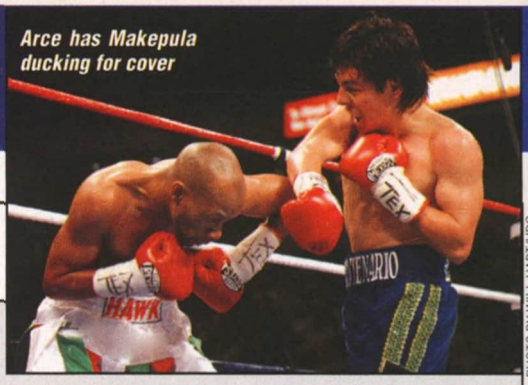

Arce has Makepula ducking for cover

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

51 JORGE **ARCE**
Junior Bantamweight 47-4-1 (36)

Last Year's Ranking: 23
Status Report: After a pair of nice wins on HBO against overmatched foes Hawk Makepula (KO 4) and Julio David Roque Ler (W 12), the shine came off when "El Travieso" proved too slow and predictable for Cristian Mijares (L 12) in April. Loss was bloody and fast-paced, so Mexican reality TV star's popularity shouldn't suffer much.
Future: Won't have any trouble getting another opportunity, as evidenced by talk of a November bout with Martin Castillo. After 51 fights and a lot of weight fluctuation, however, may already be on the downside at age 28.

52 KASSIM **OUMA** Junior Middleweight 25-3-1 (15) with 1 no-contest

Last Year's Ranking: 24
Status Report: Showed a good chin and plenty of determination, but couldn't get much done offensively when he rose in weight last December to challenge world middleweight champ Jermain Taylor (L 12). Not a bad loss, but considering he's the only opponent in Taylor's last five fights who was defeated without controversy, not exactly a good loss either. Ugandan southpaw definitely belongs at junior middle, but even at the correct weight, best days may be behind him at 28.
Future: Card featuring September bout with Sergio Mora was canceled. We hope that fight is rescheduled; it has a make-or-break feel for both guys.

53 CELESTINO **CABALLERO**
WBA Super Bantamweight Titleholder 27-2 (18)

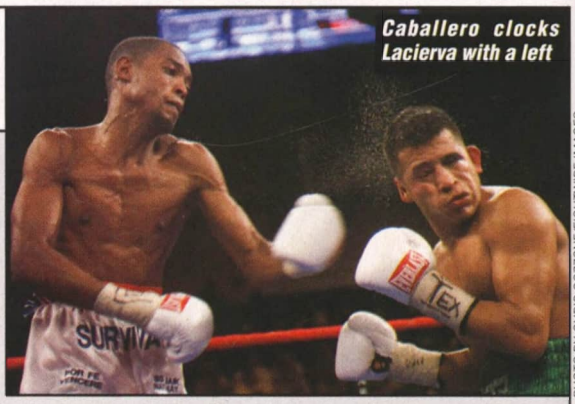

Caballero clocks Lacierva with a left

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Last Year's Ranking: 78
Status Report: Having already won alphabet eliminators and "interim" titles, Panamanian snagged the full WBA 122-pound title with a stunningly easy destruction of Somsak Sithchatchawal (KO 3) in October '06. Sparkled against Ricardo Castillo in March, winning by ninth-round DQ when challenger's corner entered ring to stop the fight, but struggled against Jorge Lacierva in August, winning narrowly on points.
Future: Wants world champ Israel Vazquez, but Vazquez has Rafael Marquez on his mind. Stuck in a bit of a quandary, as nobody's dying to fight the lanky boxer-puncher.

54 LUIS **PEREZ** IBF Bantamweight Titleholder 25-1 (16)

Last Year's Ranking: 66
Status Report: In what's becoming something of a trend, "El Demoledor" fought only once in the past year—but at least it was an outstanding result, as he moved up from 115 and spanked solid veteran contender Genaro Garcia (KO 7) for a vacant bantamweight belt. Still, since upsetting Felix Machado for his first belt in January 2003, has fought only four times. That's right, four fights in 4½ years. What a waste.
Future: Alphabet mandatory is unworthy William Gonzalez—he of the three-round kayo loss to Jhonny Gonzalez two years ago. But hey, a fight is a fight; any bout for Perez would be worthwhile instead of playing the waiting game.

55 WLADIMIR **KLITSCHKO** IBF Heavyweight Titleholder 49-3 (44)

Last Year's Ranking: 72
Status Report: The premier fighter in boxing's premier division performed about as well as you could ask him to in making three alphabet title defenses against decent, if not quite first-rate, opposition. First he spoiled the perfect record of Calvin Brock (KO 7) with one huge right hand, then he slaughtered Ray Austin (KO 2) with left hooks, and lastly he avenged a loss by beating Lamon Brewster (KO 6) into submission. The 6'6" Ukrainian is on top of his game, though doubts about his chin linger.
Future: Off for the remainder of '07 because HBO's budget is used up. Will fight in early-'08, with Hasim Rahman among the possible opponents.

55 WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO

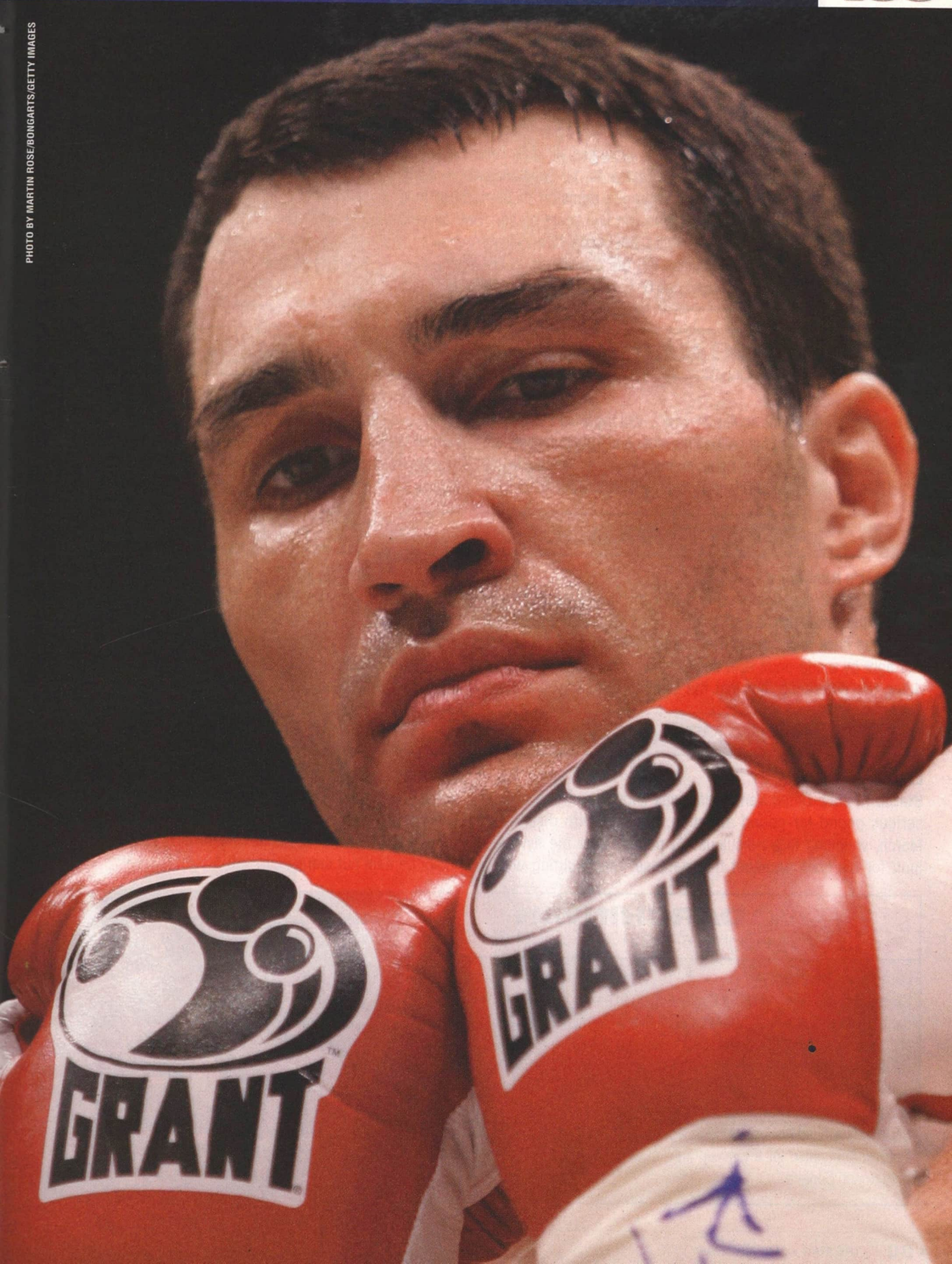


PHOTO BY MARTIN ROSE/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

PHOTO BY YOSHIKAZU TSUNO/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Niida (right) en route to decision over Gejon

56 YUTAKA **NIIDA**
WBA Minimumweight Titleholder 22-1-3 (8)

Last Year's Ranking: 58
Status Report: After a 13-month layoff, Japanese slickster returned with a pair of solid wins, edging Katsunari Takayama by split decision in April, then topping Eriberto Gejon by unanimous decision in September in a rematch to a narrow technical decision win two years earlier. Tiny 28-year-old has been inconsistent over the course of his two alphabet title reigns and nine title fights, but boxed 12 excellent rounds against Gejon and got stronger as the fight wore on.
Future: Now that Ivan Calderon has left the division, is in line for real championship recognition—if he's willing to face fellow titlists, something no strawweight has done since the days of Ricardo Lopez.

57 OMAR **NARVAEZ** Flyweight 25-0-2 (16)

Last Year's Ranking: 93
Status Report: Argentine southpaw who's held the WBO 112-pound strap since his 12th pro fight added his ninth and 10th defenses, the latter a meaningful one. First came ordinary Walberto Ramos (W 12) in October '06, then 2000 Olympic gold medalist Brahim Asloum (W 12) was convincingly dispatched in March '07. Making the win more impressive, Narvaez went to Asloum's native France to beat him.
Future: Was scheduled for a fight with Marlon Marquez, 11-2 (4), in Argentina immediately after our press deadline. Sounds about as safe as they come.

58 ROBERTO **VASQUEZ** Flyweight 24-2 (17)

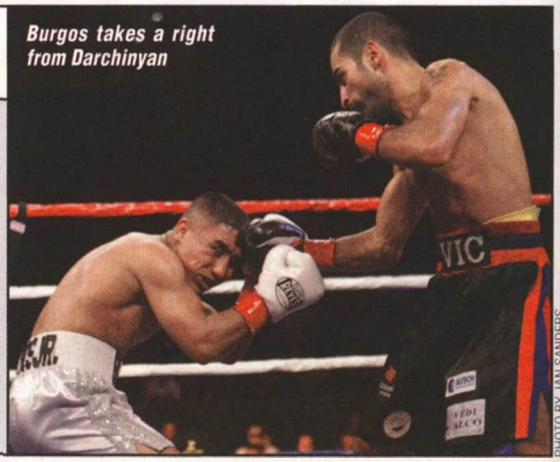
Last Year's Ranking: 45
Status Report: "La Arana" split a pair of bouts with Takefumi Sakata, the latter of the two ending a six-year winning streak that dated back to Vasquez' first pro fight. Panamanian won the first fight by a one-point split decision, an early knockdown providing the difference, but lost the thrilling rematch by a close unanimous decision, flaming out after a fast start. Prior to the Sakata series, won an easy 10-round decision over anonymous Horlan Hamilton.
Future: Had an October marking-time bout against John Alberto Molina set as of press time. If he keeps winning, should eventually get a rubber match with Sakata.

59 LORENZO **PARRA** Flyweight 27-1 (17)

Last Year's Ranking: 21
Status Report: Gifted Venezuelan was knocking on the door of serious pound-for-pound attention, but met with disaster in March, weighing in a ridiculous 4¾ pounds over the flyweight limit for his sixth alphabet title defense, then quitting with a shoulder injury early in the third round against Takefumi Sakata—a fighter Parra had previously decisioned twice.
Future: Injury-plagued fighter needs to get healthy, and needs to train properly. When at his best, can hang with any flyweight or junior bantam out there.

60 VIC **DARCHINYAN**
Flyweight 28-1 (22)

Last Year's Ranking: 44
Status Report: Nothing had a happy ending this year for the excessively confident "Raging Bull." First he dominated Glenn Donaire and had to settle for a sixth-round technical decision and not a kayo based on a questionable ruling by the ref. Then the Armenian-Aussie battered Victor Burgos (KO 12) into a coma, the result every victor dreads (though Burgos is recovering). And, finally, Darchinyan had what looked like an easy fight against Nonito Donaire (brother of Glenn) turn into his first pro loss, a devastating fifth-round knockout.
Future: Scheduled for a tune-up fight in October, then looking for a rematch with Nonito Donaire.



Burgos takes a right from Darchinyan

PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

57 OMAR NARVAEZ

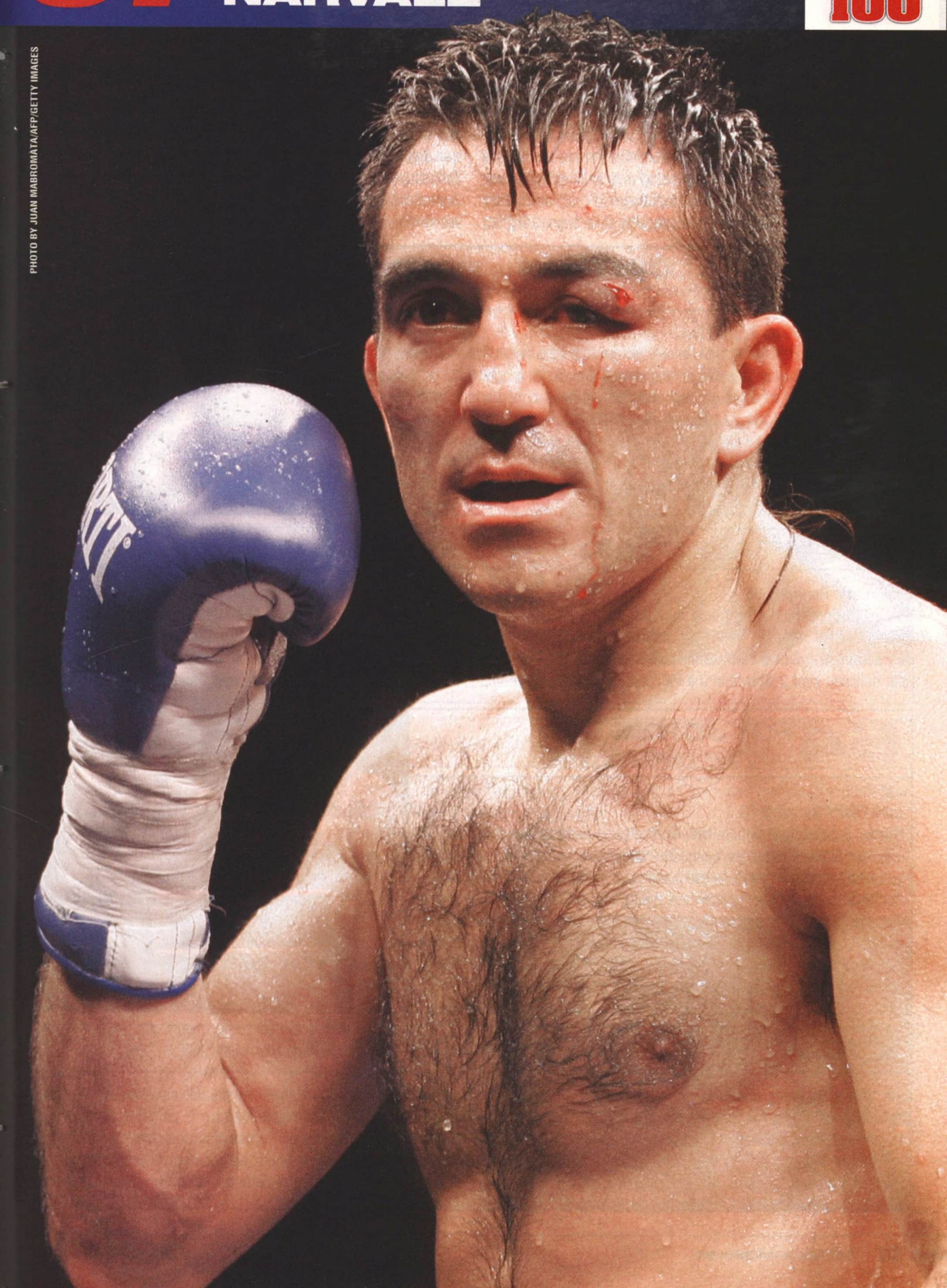


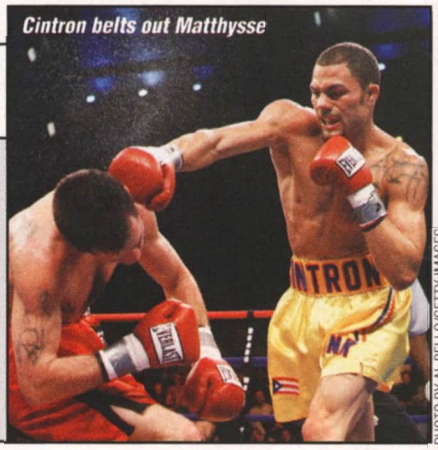
PHOTO BY JUAN MABROMATA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

61 SERGEI **DZINDZIRUK** Junior Middleweight 34-0 (22)

Last Year's Ranking: 61
Status Report: Germany-based Ukrainian lefty showed that he can tread water with the best of 'em, winning meaningless fights over the inexperienced duo of Alisultan Nadirbegov (W 12) and Carlos Nascimento (KO 11). The evidence suggests he's a good fighter, but so far, 31-year-old has made zero impact outside of Germany and done nothing to put his name in the mix for a major fight.
Future: Oscar De La Hoya is listed as his WBO mandatory. Something tells us "The Golden Boy" has better things to do with his time.

62 KERMIT **CINTRON** IBF Welterweight Titleholder 28-1 (26)

Last Year's Ranking: 92
Status Report: Put kayo loss to Antonio Margarito a little farther in the rearview mirror with two more spectacular knockout wins, showing impressive progress under trainer Emanuel Steward. Survived a couple of rough moments to beat up and bomb out fringe contender Mark Suarez (KO 6) for vacant IBF belt, then destroyed supposed tough guy Walter Matthysse (KO 2) in first defense. Last nine fights have ended inside the distance, one way or the other.
Future: There's some talk of a rematch with Margarito, which would either put loss to him permanently in the rearview, or undo the last two years' good work.

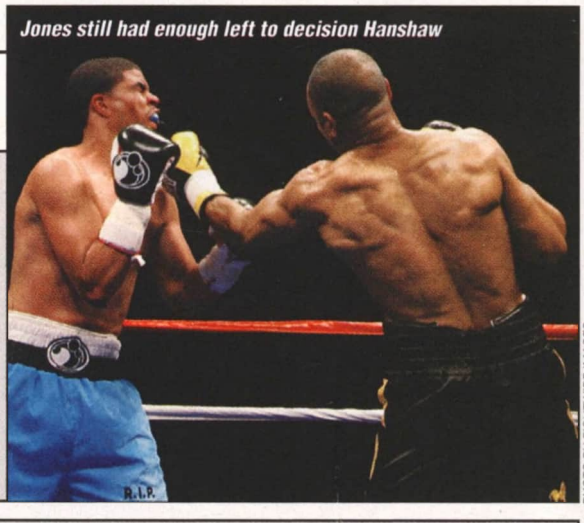

Cintron belts out Matthysse
PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

63 FERNANDO **MONTIEL** Junior Bantamweight 34-2-1 (25)

Last Year's Ranking: 68
Status Report: Following failed experiment at bantamweight, graceful stylist returned to 115 pounds with a pair of victories, one dominant, one far from dominant. In February, eked out a split decision over Z Gorres in the Philippines, then looked much better against softer opposition his next time out, dropping Cecilio Santos twice en route to a 10th-round stoppage.
Future: WBO mandatory is Pramuansak Posuwan, whom the Mexican beat on a narrow decision in '05.

64 ROY **JONES** Light Heavyweight 51-4 (38)

Last Year's Ranking: 63
Status Report: Lone fight in last 12 months, a fairly comfortable decision win over Anthony Hanshaw, suggested we had the former P-4-P king rated just about right last year—he still has enough in the tank to beat the fringe contenders, but isn't going anywhere near the elite 175-pounders.
Future: Scheduled for a January bout with un-retiring Felix Trinidad that will garner mainstream attention, but won't move Jones up the ratings ladder even if he wins convincingly. This is simply about making money and trying to add a fellow Hall of Famer's name to his resume.


Jones still had enough left to decision Hanshaw
PHOTO BY FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

65 DANIEL **PONCE DE LEON** Junior Featherweight 32-1 (29)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: If it's raw power you're looking for, the 27-year-old California-based Mexican southpaw is your man. If it's boxing skill you're looking for ... well, did we mention the power? Pounded ordinary Al Seeger (KO 8) in October '06 and vaporized previously unbeaten Rey Bautista (KO 1) in August '07, but in between, struggled to a controversial decision win over the much more clever Gerry Penalosa in March.
Future: Set for an easy September defense against natural junior bantam Reynaldo Lopez as we went to press. A win there may set up an interesting rematch with Penalosa to vindicate the first victory.

66 JORGE **BARRIOS** Junior Lightweight 47-3-1 (34) with 1 no-contest

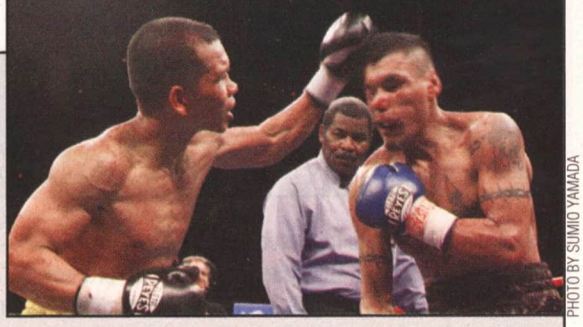
Last Year's Ranking: 62
Status Report: Just one result for wacky Argentine, a no-sweat wipeout of Thai trialhorse Decho Bakluaygym (KO 3) in April. Was scheduled for a huge opportunity in September against Juan Manuel Marquez, but had to pull out when it was discovered he had retinal tears in both eyes that required surgery.
Future: Obviously, full recovery from the eye injuries is his first priority. After that, just has to see how the important 130-pound fall fights shake down and hope that he fits in somewhere, with a possible rematch against Joan Guzman.

67 STEVE **CUNNINGHAM** IBF Cruiserweight Titleholder 20-1 (10)

Last Year's Ranking: nor rated
Status Report: After a frustratingly long wait for a title shot, Philadelphian finally got it in November '06 and lost a disputed split decision in Poland to Krzysztof Wlodarczyk for vacant IBF strap. Was willing to go back to Poland for a rematch, however, and won a majority decision in May. Not much of a puncher (despite impressive musculature), but a sharp and versatile 6'3" boxer.
Future: Probably headed for November bout with either German Marco Huck or Welshman Enzo Macarinelli. Both are talented enough to give Cunningham problems.

68 GERRY **PENALOSA** Bantamweight 52-6-2 (35)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Not really a part of the title picture for the last few years, 35-year-old ex-beltholder suddenly re-emerged with a win over Mauricio Martinez (KO 9), a controversial loss at junior featherweight to Daniel Ponce De Leon (L 12), and a single-bodyshot upset kayo of Jhonny Gonzalez (KO 7) to claim the WBO bantam strap. Ponce De Leon and Gonzalez are a combined 18 years younger than the Filipino, but his veteran wiles and determination allowed him to be more than competitive.
Future: May get a rematch with Ponce De Leon in the Philippines before the end of the year.


Many thought Penalosa (left) was robbed versus Ponce De Leon
PHOTO BY SUMIO YAMADA

69 SAMUEL **PETER** Heavyweight 28-1 (22)

Last Year's Ranking: 85
Status Report: It's not "The Nigerian Nightmare's" fault that he only fought once since last year's RING 100—you can blame the WBC's political chicanery for that. At least when he did fight, he looked great, knocking down and dominating James Toney (W 12) in a rematch to a fight Peter just barely eked out the first time. Making progress as a boxer, and has always been fearsome as a puncher.
Future: Will have fought Oleg Maskaev for the WBC heavyweight belt by the time you read this, and if successful, will be obligated to face Vitali Klitschko next, unless Klitschko latest back injury puts him back in retirement.

70 FELIX **STURM** WBA Middleweight Titleholder 28-2 (12)

Last Year's Ranking: 87
Status Report: Bounced back nicely from upset kayo loss to Javier Castillejo, defeating the trio of Gavin Topp (KO 6), Castillejo in a rematch (W 12), and Noe Alcoba (W 12). Cleared a major mental hurdle by getting revenge on Castillejo—though the fight was close, and the Spaniard is getting on in years. German has a world-class jab, but it's hard to say if the rest of his game is on par.
Future: Favored to win October mandatory defense against Philadelphia's Randy Griffin, though it's not a total walkover.

Sturm (right) regains WBA belt from Castillejo
PHOTO BY PATRIK STOLLARZ/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

71 ANTHONY **MUNDINE** Super Middleweight 29-3 (22)

Last Year's Ranking: 90
Status Report: Another solid, busy year for the Aussie, and like last year when he defeated Danny Green, it was another year in which one of his three wins held real meaning. Victories over Ruben Acosta (KO 4) and Pablo Nieves (W 12) were trivial, but dominant four-knockdown kayo of Sam Soliman (KO 9), who had never been stopped before, was noteworthy, even if Soliman is a naturally smaller man.
Future: Career is in serious jeopardy due to an eye infection caused by cleaning a contact lens in his mouth and then inserting it in his eye. Strange but true.

72 PAULIE **MALIGNAGGI** IBF Junior Welterweight Titleholder 23-1 (5)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: If you don't have punching power, you'd better have some serious boxing skills, and as it turns out, mouthy Brooklyn kid does indeed have them. Jabbed his way to an easy win over Edner Cherry (W 10) in HBO debut and first fight back after loss to Miguel Cotto, then dropped and dominated veteran Lovemore Ndou (W 12) in an eye-opening win to claim an alphabet trinket.
Future: Calling out everyone from Ricky Hatton to Julio Cesar Chavez Jr., but will likely have to settle for a mandatory defense against Herman Ngoudjo.

Malignaggi connects with a right against Ndou

PHOTO BY EMILY HARNEY/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

73 DAVID **DIAZ** WBC Lightweight Titleholder 33-1-1 (17)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: 1996 Olympian's career has progressed slowly, but he finally broke through in '07 by following up his dramatic knockout of Jose Armando Santa Cruz with an exciting win over Erik Morales (W 12) in "El Terrible's" retirement fight. Bout could have gone either way, but Diaz got benefit of doubt in his home-town of Chicago. Not the most talented fighter out there, but a gritty guy who never stops working.
Future: Ah, the WBC. They strip real champ Joel Casamayor, and then re-insert him as Diaz' mandatory. Make no mistake, if this fight happens, Diaz is the challenger, despite his victory over Morales.

74 JOSHUA **CLOTTEY** Welterweight 32-2 (19) with 1 no-contest

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Bronx-based Ghanaian split a pair of high-profile fights, doing wonders for his previously non-existent Q-rating. Jumped out to an early lead against Antonio Margarito last December before injuring his hands and settling for a decision loss, then returned to the ring in April with healthy hands and dished out a beating to Diego Corrales (W 10). A comfortable win over Felix Flores (W 10) followed in August. By the way, we don't know which of his two nicknames is more lame: "The Hitter" or "The Grand Master."
Future: On the outside looking in at the big-name welters, as the risk in facing Clottey isn't worth the reward.

75 JORGE **LINARES** WBC Featherweight Titleholder 24-0 (15)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Just 22 years old and still highly unproven, but has the look of a future pound-for-pound player. Smooth-punching, adaptable, and poised, Tokyo-based Venezuelan added a couple of easy marks to his resume, stopping Humberto Martinez (KO 6) and Ramiro Lara (KO 3), then stepped up and proved too much for highly regarded ex-titlist Oscar Larios (KO 10) in first fight in the U.S. That victory earned Linares a vacant trinket.
Future: Facing an opponent to be named on November 10 in Japan. After that, may be ready for the best in the shallow 126-pound division.

Linares overpowers Larios

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

76 VIVIAN **HARRIS** Junior Welterweight 28-3-1 (18)

Last Year's Ranking: 71
Status Report: It was a shaky year for the lanky Brooklyn-based Guyanan, who looked vulnerable in victory and then looked even more vulnerable in defeat. Had a spotty performance against past-his-best Juan Lazcano (W 12) in February, but won a majority of the rounds. Then found himself outclassed by the excellent Junior Witter (KO by 7) in September, failing in his bid to become a two-time titlist.
Future: Hard to say where "Vicious Vivian" goes from here. A fight with Paulie Malignaggi would be meaningful for Brooklyn fight fans.

77 LUIS **COLLAZO** Welterweight 27-3 (13)

Last Year's Ranking: 54
Status Report: Tattoo-loving lefty sputtered somewhat after his break-out performance against Ricky Hatton, marking time against Artur Atadzhanov (KO 6), then coming up small in losing almost every round against Shane Mosley (L 12). Suffered a hand injury in the fight, which partially explains his disappointing showing, but it probably also owed to the fact that he couldn't outspeed Mosley like he could Hatton.
Future: Had surgery on the hand and should be back in the fall. With so many big stars at 147 fighting each other, Collazo just has to stay busy and hope somebody gives him another shot.

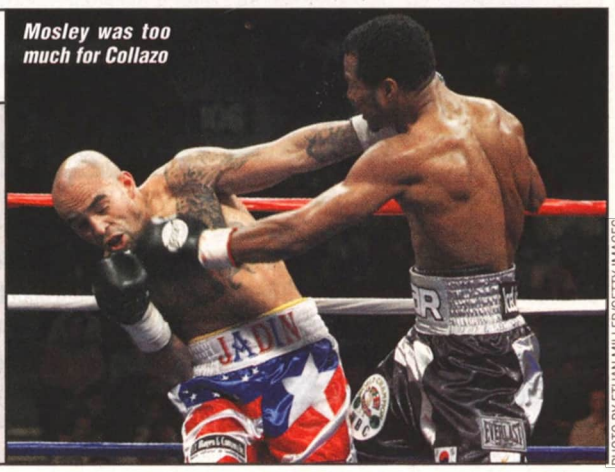

Mosley was too much for Collazo

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

78 NATE **CAMPBELL** Lightweight 31-5-1 (25)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: After ending last year's campaign with a tough-to-swallow split decision loss to Isaac Hlatshwayo that kept him out of the RING 100, "The Galaxxy Warrior" bounced back nicely with a near-shutout win over Matt Zegan (W 12), an absolutely brutal one-sided win over Ricky Quiles (W 12), and an easy outing against journeyman Wilson Alcorro (KO 6). A bit younger in ring age than his 35 years would suggest because he didn't turn pro until age 27.
Future: Is a mandatory challenger for the Juan Diaz-Julio Diaz winner, and would be a live underdog against either man.

79 STEVE **MOLITOR** IBF Junior Featherweight Titleholder 24-0 (10)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Talented Canadian southpaw returned from a frustrating 13-month layoff with a pair of quality wins, whipping previously unbeaten Brit Michael Hunter (KO 5) in England to claim vacant alphabet title, then defending belt at home in Ontario against Takalani Ndlovu (KO 9). Adding power (four straight stoppages) to go along with his swift footwork and precise skills, making him a threat to anyone at 122 pounds.
Future: Left out of the real title picture while Israel Vazquez and Rafael Marquez prepare for another meeting; how about a match with Celestino Caballero to determine the top contender?

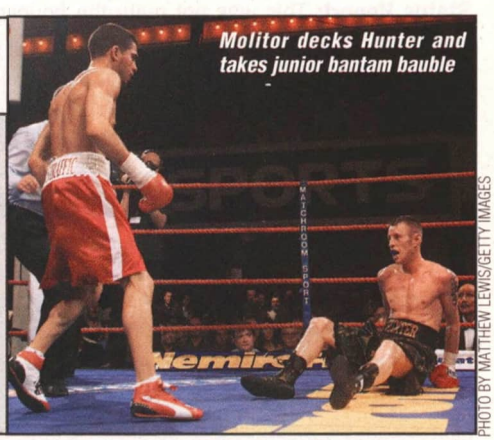

Molitor decks Hunter and takes junior bantam bauble

PHOTO BY MATTHEW LEWIS/GETTY IMAGES

80 VEERAPOL **SAHAPROM** Bantamweight 58-3-2 (42)

Last Year's Ranking: 89
Status Report: Thai veteran, who reigned as WBC beltholder from '98 to '05, continues plugging away at age 38 in search of a third shot at Hozumi Hasegawa. Five wins in the past year, against the undistinguished quintet of Maiko Yombayomba (KO 4), Koji Fujiwara (KO 3), Satoshi Niwa (W 8), Satoshi Usui (KO 4), and Makoto Tanigawa (KO 7). Two losses to Hasegawa remain his only defeats in the last 11 years.
Future: Maybe he'll eventually get that third crack at Hasegawa, though we think we know how it's going to end.

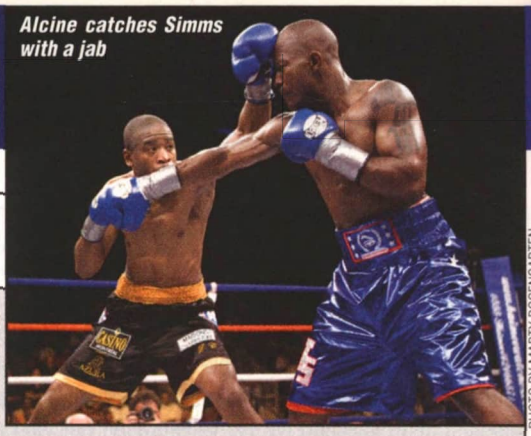

Alcine catches Simms with a jab

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

81 JOACHIM **ALCINE**
WBA Super Welterweight Titleholder 29-0 (18)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Haiti-born Canadian had passed all the usual tests (Carl Daniels, Carlos Bojorquez, Elio Ortiz), and, at 31, finally stepped up and took a shot at gifted Travis Simms for alphabet belt in July. It was an ugly, clutch-and-grab affair, but skilled challenger took a deserved unanimous decision in Simms' home state of Connecticut to enter the 154-pound picture.
Future: Mandatory challenger will be determined by Daniel Santos-Jose Antonio Rivera boxoff.

82 TRAVIS **SIMMS** Junior Middleweight 25-1 (19)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Just when everything was finally clicking for "Tremendous Travis," it was all ruined by one very un-tremendous performance. Ended a ridiculous 27-month shelving with a spectacular win over Jose Antonio Rivera (KO 9) in January, but six months later, found himself frustrated by the style of Joachim Alcine and lost a close, unanimous decision in a hard-to-watch fight.
Future: Somewhat worthy of a rematch with Alcine, but does anyone want to see it? At age 36, really needs to get busy, start a winning streak, and position himself for another opportunity.

83 TOMASZ **ADAMEK** Cruiserweight 32-1 (22)

Last Year's Ranking: 70
Status Report: A bit tricky to rank pound-for-pound because he just went from highly rated light heavy to unrated cruiser. Started the last 12 months with a thrilling win over Paul Briggs (W 12) in defense of 175-pound alphabet belt, then suffered first defeat against uber-talented Chad Dawson (L 12), and followed that by gaining nearly 25 pounds to outslug Luis Pineda (KO 7) in cruiserweight debut.
Future: Could be a real factor in the 200-pound division if he proves capable of taking the punches of the bigger men. Certainly has the speed, skill, and heart to pose problems.

84 JEFF **LACY** Super Middleweight 22-1 (17) with 1 no-contest

Last Year's Ranking: 83
Status Report: This was not quite the bounce-back year that "Left Hook" was hoping for, as what looked on paper like a safe fight against Vitali Tsypko last December posed both short-term and long-term problems. Short-term: Lacy struggled mightily to eke out a debatable 10-round majority decision. Long term: The 2000 Olympian suffered a serious shoulder injury that has caused almost a yearlong layoff.
Future: Peter Manfredo, someone who will stay in front of him, has reportedly set his sights on Lacy, which may be just the high-profile opportunity the muscular ex-beltholder needs to get back on track.

85 ROBERT **GUERRERO**
IBF Featherweight Titleholder
20-1-1 (13) with 1 no-contest

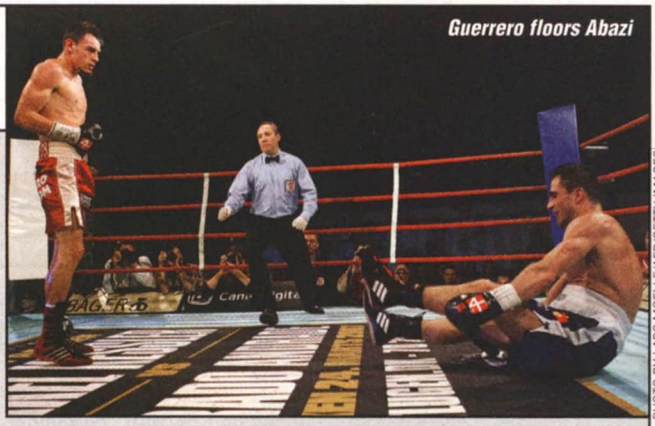

Guerrero floors Abazi

PHOTO BY LARS MOELLE/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: "The Ghost" solidified his reputation as one of boxing's most inconsistent up-and-comers, but when he's on his game, the potential is undeniable. In first defense of IBF belt, suffered an upset loss to Orlando Salido, but had the result changed to a no-contest when Salido failed his postfight drug test. Got an immediate crack at the vacant title and looked infinitely better dominating Spend Abazi (KO 9) in Denmark.
Future: First, a September fight with Rocky Juarez fell through, then a replacement fight with Martin Honorio got canceled. At this point, he'd probably be happy just to make one more defense before '07 ends.

86 LUCIAN **BUTE**
Super Middleweight 20-0 (16)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Highly touted Canadian prospect proved well worthy of the hype by comfortably defeating rugged Sakio Bika (W 12) in June in his first major bout on American television. Prior to that, shut out decent Sergey Tatevosyan over 12 rounds. The 6'2", 27-year-old southpaw has shown diminishing power against better opposition since a 15-0 (15) start, but has excellent technique.
Future: Will be favored as the challenger when he takes on trinket-holder Alejandro Berrio in Montreal right around the time this magazine hits newsstands.

Bute jolts Bika
PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

87 GIOVANNI **SEGURA** Junior Flyweight 18-0-1 (14)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Simply put, 25-year-old Mexican-American mite is one of the most explosive punchers in the sport—as evidenced by his 98-second June blowout of former strawweight titlist Daniel Reyes, who had never been stopped in 43 previous fights. Also owns a one-round win over Francisco Arce, and the lone blemish on his record, a four-round draw in his second fight, has been twice avenged.
Future: Who wouldn't love to see a showdown between Segura, one of the best P-4-P punchers alive, and Ivan Calderon, one of the best pure boxers, for The Ring title? In fairness, though, Segura could probably use a few more fights' experience first.

88 OLEG **MASKAEV** WBC Heavyweight Titleholder 34-5 (26)

Last Year's Ranking: 82
Status Report: Only fought once in past 12 months due to political wrangling and attempts to bump mandatory challenger Sam Peter in favor of more lucrative fight with Vitali Klitschko. Hard to say anything particularly positive or negative about "The Big O's" lone fight, a near-shutout over completely unworthy Peter Okhello (W 12).
Future: Repeatedly delayed Peter fight will be history by the time you read this. A win propels Kazakh on to a fight with the elder Klitschko brother (providing Vitali returns from latest injury); a loss makes him the gatekeeper of choice in the division.

89 RUSLAN **CHAGAEV**
WBA Heavyweight Titleholder 23-0-1 (17)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Uzbek southpaw made the leap from prospect to beltholder with a pair of noteworthy wins, both of which might be considered mild upsets. In November, took a narrow split decision over John Ruiz, then challenged 46-0 behemoth Nikolay Valuev in April and captured a well-deserved majority decision to snag an alphabet belt. Doesn't do anything spectacularly, but is a smart, sturdy 230-pounder with good ring generalship.
Future: Mysterious ailment kept him out of October unification with Sultan Ibragimov, but is expected to fight before the end of '07.

Chagaev stuns Valuev
PHOTO BY OLIVER LANG/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

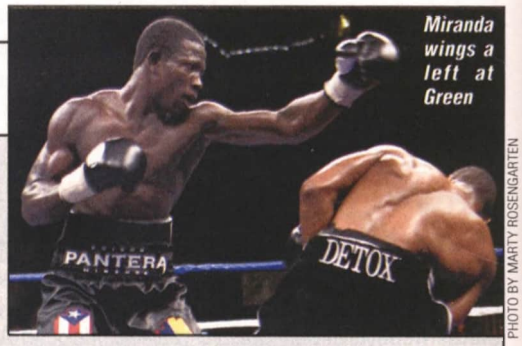
90 WLADIMIR **SIDORENKO** WBA Bantamweight Titleholder 20-0-2 (7)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Even fighters who can't punch score a knockout every now and then. Germany-based Ukrainian scored his first kayo in 10 fights when he took out Jerome Arnould (KO 7) in France in June. Prior to that, settled for a majority draw against tough Ricardo Cordoba in March, the second time in a row Sidorenko and Cordoba have found themselves knotted after 12.
Future: There simply aren't a lot of high-profile bantamweights to square off with in Europe. And Sidorenko himself isn't all that high profile. May have to go to Asia to really prove himself.

91 RICARDO **CORDOBA** Bantamweight 30-1-2 (19)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: If Wladimir Sidorenko makes the top 100, then Panamanian stringbean must as well, since he's now recorded two draws against Sidorenko in alphabet title challenges. Latest one came in March '07, with a pair of marking time bouts—W 8 Edinson Jimenez, W 8 Hevinson Herrera—sandwiched around it. Also of note: Cordoba is the last to beat Celestino Caballero, something he achieved in '04.
Future: Equally comfortable at 118 or 122 pounds, which means a greater number of attractive possibilities. Rematch with Caballero would be about the biggest fight you could make in Panama.

92 EDISON **MIRANDA** Middleweight 28-2 (24)



Miranda wings a left at Green
PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: "Pantera" suffered the first two defeats of his career in the past 12 months, but enters the top 100 because he also scored two excellent wins, and because one of the losses was, in the opinion of many, a loss to be proud of. Lost a battle of unbeatens to Arthur Abraham (L 12) in September '06, though some felt the ref and judges in Germany screwed the Colombian. Bounced back with meaningful wins over Willie Gibbs (KO 1) and Allan Green (W 10) before meeting his match in the powerful Kelly Pavlik (KO by 7) in May.
Future: October return planned at super middle.

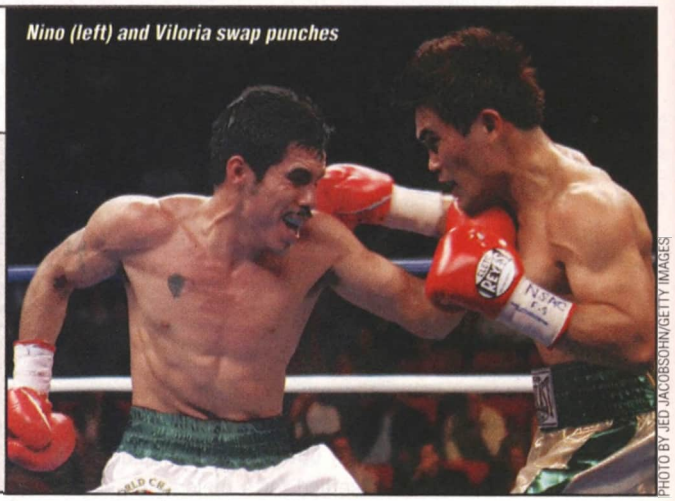
93 EAGLE **KYOWA** WBC Strawweight Titleholder 18-1 (6)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Tokyo-based Thailander made two more defenses in his second alphabet title reign, edging Lorenzo Trejo on a one-point unanimous decision last November and winning 11 of 12 rounds against inexperienced Akira Yaegashi in June. Only loss remains a fluky shoulder-injury-forced surrender against Isaac Bustos in '04.
Future: December defense against Oleydong Sithsamerchai in Bangkok looks like a fair test on paper, as the challenger is unbeaten, though inexperienced at the world-class level.

94 VERNO **PHILLIPS** Junior Middleweight 41-10-1 (21) with 1 no-contest

Last Year's Ranking: 48
Status Report: At age 37, can't afford too many wasted years, but that's what the last 12 months were. Denver vet fought only once, scoring a close 10-round decision win over spoiler Eddy Sanchez in February. Maybe a tad past his best physically, but still clever enough to handle all but the very best at 154.
Future: In position for a mandatory shot at Cory Spinks, and was slated for a fall tune-up fight as we went to press.

95 OMAR **NINO** Junior Flyweight 24-2-1 (10) with 1 no-contest


Nino (left) and Viloria swap punches
PHOTO BY JED JACOBSOHN/GETTY IMAGES

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Underrated little Mexican re-affirmed his superiority over Brian Viloria in November … sort of. After retaining the WBC belt on a majority draw (if anything, the decision was a tad friendly to Viloria), he tested positive for crystal meth and saw the result changed to a no-contest. Went on to serve a nine-month suspension that ended in August.
Future: A showdown with fellow Mexican Edgar Sosa, who edged Viloria for the vacant belt after Nino was stripped, makes perfect sense. Interestingly, Nino holds a 2002 decision win over Sosa.

96 EDGAR **SOSA** WBC Light Flyweight Titleholder 29-5 (15)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Landed a shot at Brian Viloria for vacant 108-pound belt in April and made the most of it, scoring the upset via two-point majority decision. Scored successful first defense in July, winning on a 10th-round low-blow DQ over journeyman (and alphabet mandatory) Luis Lazarte. Has now won 17 straight over four years, and most of his losses are to good fighters: two to Ulises Solis, one to Isaac Bustos, one to Omar Nino.
Future: Tallied a ninth-round TKO of Lorenzo Trejo in mid-September to record his second defense of the alphabet strap he won by beating Brian Viloria in April '07. Hopefully, a match with a serious, RING-rated contender is next.

97 JOSE LUIS **CASTILLO** Junior Welterweight 55-8-1 (47)

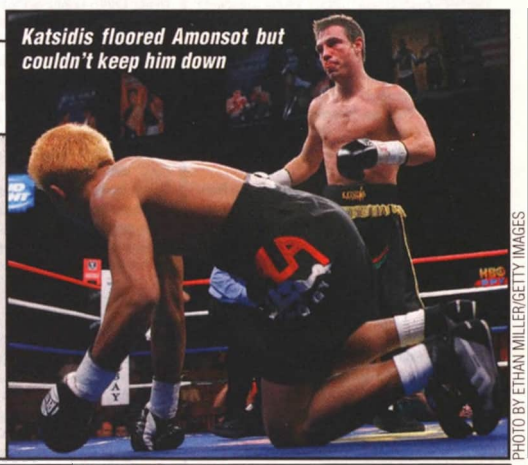
Last Year's Ranking: 9
Status Report: The former lightweight champ takes a massive tumble because, frankly, he looked shot against Ricky Hatton (KO by 4), but he still finds a spot in the lower reaches of THE RING 100 on the "veteran who's been so good for so long that we can't quite write him off completely due to one loss" clause. Before Hatton fight, 33-year-old squeaked by Herman Ngoudjo on a 12-round split decision.
Future: Faced a lot of distractions heading into the Hatton fight, not unlike Marco Antonio Barrera against Manny Pacquiao a few years ago. Castillo's next fight should tell us whether he's finished or can rebound like Barrera did.

98 SILENCE **MABUZA** Bantamweight 20-2 (16)

Last Year's Ranking: 96
Status Report: So he lost twice to Rafael Marquez. Those are losses we can definitely forgive. South African needed nine-month layoff to recuperate from taxing second Marquez defeat and eased back into action in May with a nice win over Tanzania's Mbwana Matumla (KO 5).
Future: Now that Marquez is at 122 pounds, bantam title picture is wide open, and 29-year-old Mabuza may yet prove to be the best. Shouldn't have much trouble in November bout with David Marchiano.

99 MICHAEL **KATSIDIS** Lightweight 23-0 (20)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: We don't know how far 27-year-old Aussie can go or how long he'll last, but we look forward to every moment we'll spend finding out. Katsidis looks like the best candidate to inherit Arturo Gatti's throne as boxing's drama king. Both of his 2007 bouts were Fight of the Year candidates: an off-the-canvas stoppage of Graham Earl (KO 5) in February and a sickeningly bloody battle with gutsy Czar Amonsot (W 12) in July.
Future: Needs some time to fully heal from cuts, but there's talk of an '08 bout with Juan Diaz. Yes, please.



Katsidis floored Amonsot but couldn't keep him down

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

100 DAVID **HAYE** Cruiserweight 19-1 (18)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: British powerhouse has pretty well erased the memory of upset kayo loss to Carl Thompson in '04, running off nine straight wins, including two good ones in the last 12 months. Handed Giacobbe Fragomeni (KO 9) his first loss in defense of European cruiserweight belt, then swelled to 217 pounds for a heavyweight bout against Tomasz Bonin, which ended in a highly impressive first-round knockout win for the man known as "Hayemaker."
Future: Slated for the ultimate test in November, a shot at world cruiser champ Jean-Marc Mormeck in Paris. Win or lose, should be headed up to heavyweight for good after that.

Haye rips Fragomeni with a right

PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

BACK ISSUES OF KO

Back issues of several editions of *KO Magazine,* the acknowledged leader in boxing journalism, are still available in limited quantity. Since its inception in 1980, *KO* has become known for its quality stories and columns and peak-action photographs. Don't delay. Supplies are running out!

June 1983: WBA Jr. Middleweight Champion Davey Moore: Bracing For Duran's Last Stand. Color Pinup: Donald Curry. Interview: Pinklon Thomas. Also: Duran-Cuevas, Hagler-Sibson.

Aug. 1983: Michael Spinks: King Of The Light Heavyweights ... But The Glory Can't Erase The Sadness. Color Pinup: Johnny Bumphus. Interview: Jones & Rappaport. Also: Jones-McCrory, Pryor-Arguello II preview, world's best fighter poll, Jeff Chandler, Mark Breland, Leon Spinks.

Oct. 1983: Is Larry Holmes Finished? Color Pinup: Greg Page. Interview: Marvis Frazier. Also: Marvin Hagler, Bobby Chacon, Jack Dempsey.

July 1984: Donald Curry: "I'm Better Under Pressure." Color Pinup: Gerrie Coetzee. Interview: Curry. Also: Pipino Cuevas, John Mugabi, Bill Costello, M. Spinks-Davis.

Aug. 1984: WBC Heavyweight Champion Terrible Tim Witherspoon: A Superstar Of Tomorrow? Color Pinup: Rocky Lockridge. Interview: Sugar Ray Leonard. Also: Marvin Hagler, Gomez-LaPorte.

Oct. 1984: Golden Boy Mark Breland: Can He Be The Next Sugar Ray? Color Pinup: Jaime Garza. Interview: Aaron Pryor. Also: Bramble-Mancini, Sugar Ray Leonard.

Nov. 1984: Thomas Hearns: "Hagler Is Shakin' Like A Leaf On A Tree!" Color Pinup: Tim Witherspoon. Interview: Livingstone Bramble. Also: Rosario-Davis, Marlon Starling.

Feb. 1985: Gerry Cooney: How Far Can He Go This Time? Color Pinup: Michael Spinks. Interview: Ray Mancini. Also: Dream fights, Hector Camacho.

March 1985: Next For Marvelous Marvin Hagler: The Only Fight That Really Matters. Color Pinup: Mike McCallum. Interview: Thomas Hearns. Also: Santos-Medal, Meza-Garza, Holmes-Bonecrusher.

May 1985: Thomas Hearns: *KO* Fighter Of The Year. Color Pinup: Gerry Cooney. Also: Camacho-Ramirez, Truth Williams, Year In Review.

July 1985: Aaron Pryor: Has Hawk Time Run Out? Color Pinup: Donald Curry. Interview: Greg Page. Also: Ray Mancini, James Shuler, Costello-Hatcher.

Aug. 1985: King Cobra: "Hagler-Hearns Is Done And I'm Better Than Both Of Them!" Color Pinup: John Mugabi. Interview: Bobby Czyz. Also: Larry Holmes, Roberto Duran, DeWitt-Lee.

Oct. 1985: Still Champ After All These Years: Larry Holmes—A Legend Continues To Grow. Interview: Mark Breland. Also: Michael Spinks, Milton McCrory, Wilfredo Gomez.

Nov. 1985: McGuigan! The Pluck Of The Irish. Also: Julio Cesar Chavez, Thomas-Weaver, Donald Curry, featherweights.

Dec. 1985: Pinklon Thomas: "Larry Holmes Betrayed Boxing." Color Pinup: Hagler-Mugabi. Also: Mike McCallum, Tyrell Biggs, Camacho-Ramirez.

Jan. 1986: Macho Mania! Hector Camacho Takes Aim At 10 Tough Targets. Color Pinup: Jimmy Paul. Interview: Alexis Arguello. Also: Truth Williams, Curry-McCrory.

Feb. 1986: King Michael: How Long Will He Rule The Heavyweights? Also: Barry McGuigan, Shawn O'Sullivan, Spinks-Holmes, *Rocky IV,* world's best fighter poll.

Oct. 1986: They're Back!!! The Cooney Circus Returns. Interview: Sugar Ray Leonard. Also: Jimmy Paul, Mike Tyson, Donald Curry.

Dec. 1986: Larry Holmes' Message To Mike Tyson: "Show Me You Can Kick My Butt!" Color pinup: Mark Breland. Interview: Holmes. Also: Witherspoon-Bruno, Evander Holyfield, Cruz-McGuigan, Danny Lopez.

Feb. 1987: Upset Of The Decade: Has Honeyghan Cut Short The Curry Era? Color Pinup: Marvin Johnson. Interview: Bobby Czyz. Also: Edwin Rosario, Hector Camacho.

June 1987: New WBA Welterweight Champion Mark Breland: He's Got A Lot To Smile About. Interview: Marvin Hagler. Color Pinup: Greg Haugen. Also: Michael Olajide, Carlos Monzon.

Oct. 1987: Greatness Beckons: When Will Mike Tyson Answer The Call? Color Pinup: Michael Olajide. Interview: Tyrell Biggs. Also: Paz-Haugen, Marvin Hagler.

Nov. 1987: Michael Spinks: The War With Tyson Is Okay With Him. Color Pinup: Vinny Pazienza. Interview: Frankie Duarte. Also: Matthew Hilton, Hagler-Czyz.

Dec. 1987: Mike Tyson: Undisputed Heavyweight King—But Is He Losing His Loyal Subjects? Color Pinup: Matthew Hilton. Interview: Barry McGuigan. Also: Aaron Pryor, Mike McCallum.

Jan. 1988: The Collapse Of A Hero: Why Breland Never Hit The Mark Of Greatness. Color Pinup: Michael Spinks. Interview: Aaron Pryor. Also: Michael Nunn, Alexis Arguello, lightweights.

Feb. 1988: Pazienza & Haugen Go For Each Other's Throats. Color Pinup: Marlon Starling. Interview: Bob Arum. Also: Tate-Olajide, ESPN Boxing.

July 1988: Superfight History Dictates: Don't Expect The Expected From Tyson-Spinks. Color Pinup: Roger Mayweather. Interview: Dr. Ferdie Pacheco. Also: Roberto Duran, Azumah Nelson, Barkley-Olajide.

Aug. 1988: Tyson-Spinks: *KO's* Fearless Forecast Of Superfight '88. Color Pinup: Buddy McGirt. Interview: Matthew Hilton. Also: Lockridge-Knight, Evander Holyfield, Lloyd Honeyghan.

Sept. 1988: Tyson-Spinks, The Aftermath—What If Tyson Wins; What If Spinks Wins? Color Pinup: Frank Tate. Interview: Marlon Starling. Also: Barry McGuigan, Simon Brown, risk-taking.

Oct. 1988: Middleweight Terrorism: Iran Bombs The Hit Man. Color Pinup: Don Lalonde. Interview: Frank Bruno. Also: Roger Mayweather, Marvin Hagler.

Dec. 1988: Sugar Ray's Comeback: Why? Color Pinup: Simon Brown. Interview: Kevin Rooney. Also: Michael Nunn, best fighter poll, welterweight wars.

Jan. 1989: The Troubled Times Of Mike Tyson. Color Pinup: Lloyd Honeyghan. Interview: Gil Clancy. Also: Meldrick Taylor, Jeff Fenech, Boxing's Champs.

Aug. 1989: Special 100th Issue. Color Pinup: Hagler vs. Hearns. Also: The *KO* Years, 50 most influential people, '80s ratings, best of *KO* Interview, year-by-year review, Sugar Ray Robinson.

Sept. 1989: "I Beat Up Tyson Before, I'll Do It Again," by Carl Williams. Color Pinup: Michael Nunn. Also: Chavez-Mayweather, Brian Mitchell, Marv Albert.

Feb. 1990: George Foreman Risks A Multimillion-Dollar Shot At Tyson. Color Pinup: Brian Mitchell. Interview: Riddick Bowe. Also: Simon Brown, Molina-Lopez, East vs. West.

June 1990: A Sugar-Free Future? Thomas Hearns Is Looking Up. Color Pinup: Glenn McCrory. Interview: Michael Moorer. Also: Matthew Hilton, Molina-Suarez, Foreman-Cooney, Camacho-Paz.

July 1990: *KO* Interview—Sugar Ray Leonard. Color Pinup: Jorge Paez. Also: Michael Nunn, Buster Douglas, Jibaro Perez, the Olympians.

Aug. 1990: Meldrick Taylor: Brilliance In Defeat. Color Pinup: Buster Douglas. Interview: Teddy Atlas. Also: Buddy McGirt, Dokes-Ruddock, Simon Brown.

Sept. 1990: *KO* Interview—Buster Douglas. Color Pinup: Macho Camacho. Also: Thomas Hearns, Nigel Benn, Greg Haugen, Boxing Hall of Fame.

Oct. 1990: Send In The Clown: Is Jorge Paez A Phenom Or A Fraud? Color Pinup: Paul Banke. Interview: Tony Lopez. Also: Chavez-Taylor II, Jesse Benavides.

Nov. 1990: The Comeback Of Mike Tyson: A Crooked Course Straight To The Top. Color Pinup: Tony Lopez. Interview: Don Dunphy. Also: Davis-Breland, Riddick Bowe, federal commission.

Dec. 1990: The Heart Of The Matter: Who Will Survive The Holyfield-Douglas War? Color Pinup: Terry Norris. Interview: Virgil Hill. Also: Michael Carbajal, Ruelas Brothers, best fighter poll.

Jan. 1991: Macho Ado About Nothing? Why Hector Camacho Wants To Be Believed. Color Pinup: Meldrick Taylor. Interview: Irving Rudd. Also: Sugar Ray Leonard, Orlando Canizales, Vinny Pazienza.

Feb. 1991: 10 Fighters To Fear: Boxing's Most Destructive Hitters. Color Pinup: Razor Ruddock. Interview: Ray Mercer. Also: Roberto Duran, Saoul Mamby, Mills Lane, Sugar Ray Robinson.

May 1991: Ruddock Eyes The Big Upset Of Tyson. Color Pinup: Luisito Espinosa. Interview: Jeff Fenech. Also: Virgil Hill, Pernell Whitaker, Alex Ramos, Simon Brown, Buddy McGirt.

June 1991: Exclusive *KO* Interview: Evander Holyfield. Color Pinup: Raul Perez. Also: Norris-Leonard, Charles Williams, champs of 1971 vs. 1991, J.C. Chavez.

July 1991: Riddick Bowe: Is He Destined To Be Heavyweight Champ? Color Pinup: Michael Carbajal. Interview: Buddy McGirt. Also: Bobby Czyz, Buster Douglas, Mark Breland.

Aug. 1991: Desert Storm II: Will The Tyson-Ruddock Rematch Be Different? Color Pinup: Loreto Garza. Interview: Michael Carbajal. Also: Brown-Blocker, Fenech-Nelson preview, Harold Brazier, Yuh-Carbajal.

Sept. 1991: Remember Me? I Won The Fight! What "The Real Deal" Still Has To Deal With. Color Pinup: Ray Mercer. Interview: Eddie Futch. Also: Larry Holmes, southpaw heavyweights, Toney-Nunn, Brown-Taylor.

Oct. 1991: Thomas Hearns Works Another Miracle! Now There Are More Hills Left To Climb. Color Pinup: Humberto Gonzalez. Interview: Mike McCallum. Also: Norris-Curry, Richard Steele, Troy Dorsey.

Dec. 1991: Tyson vs. Holyfield—The Experts Analyze The Elements That Will Decide The Fight. Color Pinup: Joey Gamache. Also: Michael Moorer, Pernell Whitaker, Greg Richardson, Robert Quiroga.

Jan. 1992: The Tyson-Holyfield Showdown: An Exclusive Forecast By George Foreman. Color Pinup: Myung Woo Yuh. Also: Fenech-Nelson, TV announcers, boxing's toughest men, Toney-McCallum.

March 1992: *KO* Interview Mike Tyson: An In-Depth, Toe-To-Toe Talk With Boxing's Biggest Star. Color Pinup: Michael Moorer. Also: Thomas Hearns, Tracy Patterson, Larry Holmes, best fighter poll.

May 1992: Division-By-Division Faceoffs: The Best Of '92 vs. The Best Of '67. Color Pinup: James Warring. Interview: Hector Camacho. Also: Tommy Morrison, Bert Cooper, Gianfranco Rosi.

June 1992: If Not Tyson Or Holyfield, Then Who? Bowe? Moorer? Ruddock? Lewis? Mercer? Color Pinup: James Toney. Interview: Shelly Finkel. Also: Scotty Olson, overrated and underrated fighters, Orlin Norris, Whitaker-Pineda.

July 1992: The Title Reign of Evander Holyfield: A Reason To Hide ... Or A Reason For Pride? Color Pinup: Buddy McGirt. Interview: Julian Jackson. Also: Kelley-Dorsey, Nelson-Fenech, Kennedy McKinney.

Aug. 1992: Bowe Knows The Big Fight: The Top Contender Analyzes Holmes-Holyfield. Color Pinup: Julian Jackson. Interview: Michael Spinks. Also: Thomas Hearns, Blue Horizon, fighting fear, Toney-Barkley, Greg Haugen.

Sept. 1992: Can Tommy Morrison Punch Out The Theory ... White Men Can't Fight. Color Pinup: Welcome Ncita. Interview: Ken Norton. Also: Reggie Johnson, Jimmy Paul, McGirt-Blocker, Ali-Shavers.

Oct. 1992: The Olympics: Golden Memories ... And Golden Futures? Color Pinup: Reggie Johnson. Interview: Bobby Czyz. Also: Genaro Hernandez, Terry Norris.

Nov. 1992: Foreman vs. Holmes: The Fight Evander Holyfield Should Have Prevented. Color Pinup: Iran Barkley. Interview: Joey Gamache. Also: Hector Camacho, Tracy Patterson, Rudy Zavala.

Dec. 1992: The Final Four: Ruddock vs. Lewis, Holyfield vs. Bowe. Color Pinup: Genaro Hernandez. Interview: Lennox Lewis. Also: Whitaker-Pineda, Bowe-Coetzer, Alex Stewart, Gamache-Lopez.

Jan. 1993: Holyfield vs. Bowe: Who Will Win And Why. Color Pinup: Al Cole. Interview: Vinny Pazienza. Also: James Toney, Terrence Alli, Maurice Blocker.

Feb. 1993: Strictly Business: George Foreman Fights For The Love Of It—The Money! Color Pinup: Vinny Pazienza. Interview: George Benton. Also: Tracy Spann, Oba Carr, greatest eras.

March 1993: Not Just Another English Muffin: Lennox Lewis Powers His Way Toward The Title. Color Pinup: Leeonzer Barber. Interview: Emanuel Steward. Also: Reggie Johnson, Lopez-Gamache, USA Network.

May 1993: Recapping The Future: Julio Cesar Chavez' Road To 100-0. Color Pinup: Terry Norris. Interview: Junior Jones. Also: Buddy McGirt, Riddick Bowe, Raul Marquez.

Dec. 1993: The *KO* Feud Rages On: "I Will Torture You!" Says Riddick Bowe To Lennox Lewis. Color Pinup: Kennedy McKinney. Also: Mississippi boxing, George Foreman, Yori Boy Campas , Carbajal-Kim, Morrison-Moorer.

June 1995: The Tug-Of-War Over Mike Tyson. Color Pinup: Wilfredo Vasquez. Interview: Oliver McCall. Also: Alejandro Gonzalez, Alexis Arguello, Kostya Tszyu.

Sept. 1996: Tyson vs. Seldon. Don't Bet On This Fight Until You've Read This Story! Color Pinup: Arturo Gatti. Interview: Butterbean. Also: Dana Rosenblatt, '92 Olympians, McGuigan-Pedroza.

Nov. 1996 (Special 88-Page Edition): The *KO* 100. Color Pinup: Terry Norris. Interview: Bob Arum. Also: Roy Jones, Roberto Duran, Joe Cortez.

Dec. 1996: Andrew Golota—Taking The Low Road to Stardom. Color Pinup: Mark Johnson. Interview: Rock Newman. Also: De La Hoya-Gonzalez, Chuck Bodak, bizarre endings, Chavez-Rosario.

Jan. 1997 (Special 88-Page Edition): Bowe-Golota II: Hatred And Vengeance ... It's A Beautiful Thing! Color Pinup: Johnny Tapia. Interview: Lou Duva. Also: Mouse Strauss, heavyweight rematches, Azumah Nelson.

Feb. 1997: *KO's* 1997 Wish List. Color Pinup: Ike Quartey. Interview: Naseem Hamed. Also: David Tua, Felix Trinidad, Adolpho Washington, Bobby Czyz.

Aug. 1997: Oscar Reaches ... But Can't Grasp The Stars. Color Pinup: Nate Miller. Interview: Hector Camacho. Also: Norris-Trinidad preview, Hall of Fame, Angel Manfredy.

Nov. 1997: Filling In The Missing Pieces: What "The Bite" Means To Boxing. Color Pinup: Christy Martin. Interview: Jim Lampley. Also: Vince Phillips, British prospects, Iran Barkley.

Holiday 1997 (Special 88-Page Edition): Holyfield-Moorer II: Can Evander Avenge His Ugliest Defeat? Color Pinup: Vince Phillips. Interview: Mills Lane. Also: Roy Jones, Baby Jake Matlala, Boxing 2000.

Jan. 1998: De La Hoya Humbles The Macho Man: "Oscar's The Best I've Ever Fought." Color Pinup: William Guthrie. Interview: Mark Johnson. Also: Johnny Tapia, Pinklon Thomas, defense.

Feb. 1998: Is Lennox Lewis The World's Best Heavyweight? Color Pinup: Charles Brewer. Interview: Marc Ratner. Also: Otis Grant, Arturo Gatti.

March 1998: Evander Holyfield: For The Real

Deal, Lewis Is No Big Deal. Color Pinup: Lou Del Valle. Interview: Lennox Lewis. Also: David Izon, Meldrick Taylor, rapid weight loss.

May 1998: Living Up To The Hype: Sometimes They Do ... Sometimes They Don't. Color Pinup: David Reid. Interview: Best Of ... (Part III). Also: Naseem Hamed, Marty Denkin, women's boxing.

June 1998: Lewis vs. Holyfield: Why The Fight Of The Year Isn't Going To Happen. Color Pinup: Evander Holyfield. Interview: Eddie Futch. Also: Hector Lizarraga, pain, Head-To-Head review.

Aug. 1998: Lewis Bombs Out Briggs: Would The WBC Champ Do This To Holyfield? Color Pinup: Keith Mullings. Interview: Shane Mosley. Also: Pernell Whitaker, Marco Antonio Barrera, Roberto Garcia.

Sept. 1998: Can Mike Tyson Make A Successful Comeback? Sugar Ray Leonard Has The Answer. Color Pinup: Michael Grant. Interview: Brad Jacobs. Also: Naseem Hamed, Wayne McCullough, Kirk Johnson.

Oct. 1998: The Ultimate Fantasy Card. Color Pinup: Oscar De La Hoya. Interview: Roy Jones. Also: Brendan Ingle, NYPD boxing, prospect blueprint.

Nov. 1998 The *KO* 100. Color Pinup: Reggie Johnson. Interview: Tim Austin. Also: Cesar Bazan, Spencer Oliver, Bobby Czyz.

Dec. 1998: Winning Fights Is Easier Than Winning Fans: Why Can't We Appreciate Roy Jones? Color Pinup: Tim Austin. Interview: Michael Grant. Also: Christy Martin, Ali Reform Act, one-hit wonders.

Holiday 1998: Toe-To-Toe With The Top 10: Where Does Tyson Fit In? Color Pinup: Shane Mosley. Inteview: Larry Hazzard. Also: Evander Holyfield, junior middleweights.

Jan. 1999 (Special 88-Page Edition): Oscar Eliminates Chavez ... Now The Real Fights Begin! Color Pinup: Yory Boy Campas. Interview: William Joppy. Also: Mark Johnson, U.S.A. vs. the world.

Feb. 1999: Holyfield & Lewis: Did They Hurt Themselves Before They Could Hurt Each Other? Color Pinup: Andrew Golota. Interview: Angel Manfredy. Also: Mismatches, Bobby Czyz on watching fights.

March 1999: Exposed! Is Hamed Really Hector Camacho In Disguise? Color Pinup: Mike Tyson. Interview: Joe Frazier. Also: Zab Judah, Vuyani Bungu, Frankie Randall.

May 1999: The Tyson Of Old ... Or Just An Old Tyson? Color Pinup: Luisito Espinosa. Interview: Fernando Vargas. Also: Antonio Diaz, Sumya Anani, standing eight-count.

June 1999: Will Tyson's Jail Time Be A Career Killer? Color Pinup: Johnny Tapia. Interview: Floyd Mayweather. Also: Roy Jones, 1999 Hall of Fame.

July 1999 (Special 88-Page Edition): De La Hoya vs. Trinidad: The Fight The Public Demands ... But Is It Going To Happen? Color Pinup: David Tua. Interview: Tommy Brooks. Also: Floyd Mayweather, Tony Marshall, best of the century.

Aug. 1999: Lewis vs. Holyfield II: Should We Expect Anything Different Next Time? Color Pinup: Fernando Vargas. Interview: David Reid. Also: Ibeabuchi-Byrd, Melissa Salamone.

Sept. 1999: Mayweather vs. Mosley: Who's The Future Of Boxing? Color Pinup: James Page. Interview: J Russell Peltz. Also: Evander Holyfield, Thomas Hearns, Angel Manfredy.

Oct. 1999 (Special 88-Page Edition): The *KO* 100. Color Pinup: Felix Trinidad. Interview: Jake LaMotta. Also: Tony Ayala, Erik Morales, Junior Jones.

Nov. 1999: De La Hoya vs. Trinidad: "It's Gonna Come Down To Who The Hell Wants It Most!" Color Pinup: David Reid. Interview: Arturo Gatti. Also: Roy Jones, Sugar Shane Mosley, Vassily Jirov.

Dec. 1999: David Reid & Fernando Vargas: Olympic Teammates On A Collision Course! Color Pinup: Zab Judah. Interview: Ike Ibeabuchi. Also: Vitali Klitschko, Antonio Tarver, Mike Tyson.

Holiday 1999 (Special 88-Page Edition): Lewis-Holyfield II: Why We Demand A Knockout! Color Pinup: Sharmba Mitchell. Interview: Paulie Ayala. Also: James Toney, James Page & Terronn Millett, decade review.

Jan. 2000: Fool's Gold? Trinidad May Have Tarnished Oscar's Image Forever! Color Pinup: Paulie Ayala. Interview: Tony Ayala Jr. Also: David Reid, Johnny Nelson.

Feb. 2000: Breakout 2000: Who's Going To Lead The Way In Y2K? Color Pinup: Roy Jones. Interview: Bob Arum. Also: Shane Mosley, Wise-Chavez, Iran Barkley.

March 2000: Mike Tyson: "I'm Tired Of This Crap!" So Are We, Mike! Color Pinup: Vernon Forrest. Interview: James Page. Also: Erik Morales & Naseem Hamed, Diego Corrales, women's boxing.

May 2000: Michael Grant vs. Lennox Lewis—25 Insiders Pick The Winner. Color Pinup: Paul Spadafora. Interview: Dan Goossen. Also: Floyd Mayweather, Johnny Tapia, southpaws.

June 2000: Lewis vs. Grant: Who Will Win ... And Why. Color Pinup: Vitali Klitschko. Interview: Sharmba Mitchell. Also: Shane Mosley, David Izon, 2000 Hall of Fame.

July 2000: Today's Fighters, Tomorrow's Hall Of Famers. Color Pinup: Keith Holmes. Interview: Shane Mosley. Also: Zab Judah, Morales-Barrera, Wayne Braithwaite.

Aug. 2000: Mosley Prepares For Oscar: "It Will Be Like The First Round Of Hagler-Hearns." Color Pinup: Steve Johnston. Interview: Chris Byrd. Also: Vargas-Quartey, Thomas Hearns, Felix Trinidad, common sense vs. cowardice.

Sept. 2000: Now Vargas Is Ready For Trinidad & De La Hoya. Color Pinup: Erik Morales. Interview: Chris Byrd. Also: Trinidad vs. all-time greats, Thomas Hearns, common sense vs. cowardice.

Oct. 2000 (Special 88-Page Edition): The *KO* 100. Color Pinup: Floyd Mayweather. Interview: Stevie Johnston. Also: Clifford Etienne, over-hyped heavyweights.

Nov. 2000: Sugar Rush! Mosley Achieves Superstardom At Oscar's Expense. Color Pinup: Lennox Lewis. Interview: Jay Larkin. Also: David Tua, Oleg Maskaev, Ben Tackie.

Dec. 2000: Mike Tyson vs. Lennox Lewis: 15 Insiders Pick The Winner. Color Pinup: Shane Mosley. Interview: Frank Maloney. Also: Oscar De La Hoya, Bronco McKart, our heroes' heroes.

[FULL-COLOR BEGINNING FEBRUARY 2001]

Feb. 2001: Fernando Vargas' Internal Battle: If He Can't Win It, He Can't Beat Trinidad. Interview: Evander Holyfield. Also: Derrick Gainer, Roy Jones, Naseem Hamed.

April 2001: Lewis Is Too Much For Tua ... But Could Tyson Do Any Better? Interview: Max Kellerman. Also: Floyd Mayweather, Wladimir Klitschko.

June 2001: Trinidad-Jones: Superfight Or Mismatch? Interview: Virgil Hill. Also: Mayweather-Corrales, Paul Ingle, Davey Hilton, Tyson's relationship with Vargas, Judah, and Mayweather.

Aug. 2001: Sugar Shane Mosley: Too Sweet For The Bad Boy Era? Interview: Richard Steele. Also: Evander Holyfield, Roy Jones, Jesus Chavez.

Oct. 2001: Tito Power—From Fans To Foes ... Everyone's Feeling It! Interview: Lou DiBella. Also: Hasim Rahman, Vargas-Rivera, F.I.S.T.

Dec. 2001: Laila Ali: The Fighter, The Sex Symbol ... The Future Of Women's Boxing? Interview: Laila Ali. Also: Oscar De La Hoya, Tim Austin, Manny Pacquiao, Hector Camacho Jr.

Feb. 2002: Bernard Hopkins: "I Am The American Dream. I Am The American Story." Interview: Wladimir Klitschko. Also: Omar Sheika, Vernon Forrest, Juan Lazcano.

April 2002: After Hitting Rock Bottom ... Lennox Is Back On The Path To Greatness. Interview: Duva Boxing. Also: Zab Judah, Mike Tyson, Thomas Tate.

June 2002: Tyson vs. Lewis: 10-Page Preview & Analysis. Interview: Jameel McCline. Also: *Ali* movie, Dorin vs. Balbi & Ward vs. Leija.

Aug. 2002: Still Crazy After All These Years: Should Mike Tyson Be Allowed To Fight? Interview: Kostya Tszyu. Also: Barrera-Morales II preview, Ayala-Adams, Ricky Hatton.

Oct. 2002: Vernon Forrest vs. Shane Mosley: Two Careers On The Line! Interview: Fernando Vargas. Also: Mayweather-Castillo, Hopkins vs. all-time greats, heavyweight scrap heap.

Dec. 2002: Wladimir Klitschko: Would He Be Too Much For Lennox? Interview: Joe Calzaghe. Also: Barrera-Morales II, Evander Holyfield, Freddie Roach.

Winter 2002: A Realistic Look At Tyson's Comeback: He Can't Make History, But He Can Make Millions. Interview: Micky Ward. Also: Antonio Tarver, Antwun Echols, Acelino Freitas.

March 2003: Oscar De La Hoya—The War That Rages Within. Interview: Klitschko brothers. Also: Kassim Ouma, Eric Morel, holiday gifts.

May 2003: Danger Zone! Will Roy Jones Be Doomed By His Heavyweight Ego? Interview: Buddy McGirt. Also: Gatti-Ward II, Floyd Mayweather, Erik Morales.

July 2003: Boxing's Biggest X-Factor: Can Hopkins Recover From His Self-Inflicted Wounds? Interview: Shane Mosley. Also: Kostya Tszyu, DaVarryl Williamson, 10 best defensive fighters.

Sept. 2003: Sugar Roy? How Jones Rates With The All-Time Greats. Interview: Chris Byrd. Also: Corrie Sanders, Jean-Marc Mormeck, Kermit Cintron.

Nov. 2003: De La Hoya-Mosley II: Will Three Years And Seven Pounds Make A Difference? Interview: James Toney. Also: Michael Watson, Erik Morales, Jones-Holyfield head-to-head.

Winter 2003: *KO* Interview Arturo Gatti: "Kostya Tszyu Needs Me More Than I Need Him." Also: Mayorga-Forrest II, Zab Judah, Corrales-Casamayor preview, Joe Calzaghe.

Feb. 2004: Shane Mosley: A Second Chance At Superstardom. Interview: Bernard Hopkins. Also: Laila Ali, Scott LeDoux, retirement.

April 2004: Human After All: Tarver Makes Jones Turn To Tyson. Interview: Emanuel Steward. Also: Sharmba Mitchell, Toney-McCline preview, trash-talking.

June 2004: What Could Tyson Do To Jones? Interview: Antonio Tarver. Also: Bernard Hopkins, Spinks-Mayorga.

Oct. 2004: Dr. Klitschko: The Perfect Band-Aid For The Heavyweight Division. Interview: Diego Corrales. Also: Monte Barrett, Cory Spinks, Vinny Paz & Sven Ottke.

Feb. 2005: Exclusive KO Interview—Manny Pacquiao. Also: Kostya Tszyu, Manning Galloway, quitting, perfect heavyweight.

June 2005: Heavyweight Champ Vitali Klitschko: He's A Lot Better Than You Think! Interview: John Ruiz & Norman Stone. Also: Glen Johnson, 2004 in review.

Oct. 2005: El Feroz With A Twist: Re-tooled Vargas Gets Defensive. Interview: Zab Judah. Also: Marco Antonio Barrera, Jean-Marc Mormeck, Julio Cesar Chavez Jr., *KO* at 25.

Feb. 2006: Can Hip Hop Revitalize Boxing? Interview: Erik Morales. Also: Zab Judah, Ricardo Mayorga, Arturo Gatti, Luis Collazo, Roman Karmazin.

❑ JUN/83	❑ AUG/88	❑ JUN/92	❑ HOL/98	❑ AUG/01
❑ AUG/83	❑ SEP/88	❑ JUL/92	❑ JAN/99	❑ OCT/01
❑ OCT/83	❑ OCT/88	❑ AUG/92	❑ FEB/99	❑ DEC/01
❑ JUL/84	❑ DEC/88	❑ SEP/92	❑ MAR/99	❑ FEB/02
❑ AUG/84	❑ JAN/89	❑ OCT/92	❑ MAY/99	❑ APR/02
❑ OCT/84	❑ AUG/89	❑ NOV/92	❑ JUN/99	❑ JUN/02
❑ NOV/84	❑ SEP/89	❑ DEC/92	❑ JUL/99	❑ AUG/02
❑ FEB/85	❑ FEB/90	❑ JAN/93	❑ AUG/99	❑ OCT/02
❑ MAR/85	❑ JUN/90	❑ FEB/93	❑ SEP/99	❑ DEC/02
❑ MAY/85	❑ JUL/90	❑ MAR/93	❑ OCT/99	❑ WIN/02
❑ JUL/85	❑ AUG/90	❑ MAY/93	❑ NOV/99	❑ MAR/03
❑ AUG/85	❑ SEP/90	❑ JUN/95	❑ DEC/99	❑ MAY/03
❑ OCT/85	❑ OCT/90	❑ SEP/96	❑ HOL/99	❑ JUL/03
❑ NOV/85	❑ NOV/90	❑ NOV/96	❑ JAN/00	❑ SEP/03
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❑ FEB/86	❑ FEB/91	❑ AUG/97	❑ MAY/00	❑ FEB/04
❑ OCT/86	❑ MAY/91	❑ HOL/97	❑ JUN/00	❑ APR/04
❑ DEC/86	❑ JUN/91	❑ JAN/98	❑ JUL/00	❑ JUN/04
❑ FEB/87	❑ JUL/91	❑ FEB/98	❑ AUG/00	❑ OCT/04
❑ JUN/87	❑ AUG/91	❑ MAR/98	❑ SEP/00	❑ FEB/05
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❑ FEB/88	❑ MAR/92	❑ NOV/98	❑ APR/01	
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Israel Vazquez

"To Achieve Something Special You Have To Take Risks"

World junior featherweight champion Israel Vazquez' assent to the top of the boxing world has been anything but predictable. Unlike his arch-rival, Rafael Marquez, the native of Mexico City was never pegged for greatness by the boxing media and had to work his way up the pound-for-pound ladder by continuously defeating fighters he wasn't supposed to beat.

After he won the vacant IBF 122-pound belt in 2004, most observers figured Vazquez would lose the title early on and fade into boxing oblivion like some other Mexican titleholders such as Nestor Garza and Vazquez' close friend, former WBA 122-pound titlist Enrique Sanchez. But starting with his world championship winning performance over Oscar Larios in December 2005, Vazquez has proven the critics wrong and has established himself not only as one of the games most exciting fighters, but also one of its finest.

After his come-from-behind knockout of dangerous Jhonny Gonzalez and his two classic wars with Marquez, some observers have started calling Vazquez, 42-4 (32), the Mexican Arturo Gatti, because he relies on his phenomenal punching power and incredible mental fortitude to win fights in dramatic fashion. Unlike Gatti, Vazquez has beaten the best fighters at or around his weight class and is universally recognized as the best fighter in his division.

On a Sunday afternoon in August, two weeks after the second Marquez fight, THE RING's bilingual correspondent, Brent Matteo Alderson, met with Vazquez and his manager, Frank Espinosa, at the upscale Mexican restaurant, Luminarias, which is located in the hills overlooking downtown Los Angeles. Out on the patio with the sun blazing and a picturesque view of the City of Angels in the background, and temperatures surpassing 90 degrees, Alderson conducted an extensive interview with the 122-pound world champion. Alderson reports:

"It's good to see a guy like Israel make it. Even though he obviously has to have a large ego to spur him on to victory against the world's best fighters, he saves it for the ring. In person he comes off as a humble, sincere, and man who is trying to use his fists as the means to provide a solid economic foundation for his family, his wife of five years and two sons, Israel Junior and Anthony. I never would have thought that Israel would be universally recognized as one of the world's best fighters, earning half-a-million-dollar purses, and headlining Showtime main events. But thanks to his uncanny determination and an unwavering belief in his ability to beat the best, his success has surpassed all expectations, except those of his manager, Frank Espinoza, who always kept the faith and continued to support and invest in Israel's growth as a fighter."

The Ring: Boxing wasn't your first love, was it?

Israel Vazquez: I was into soccer, but my father wouldn't let me play on a club team. When I was 12, for some reason or another, my father took me to the gym, so I was like, *I guess I'll be a boxer*. My older brother [German Vazquez] boxed and I would go and watch him train. Even though I didn't train, I learned a lot just watching. When I finally started to box, I developed quickly.

The Ring: Could you have been as good a soccer player as you are a boxer? Were you good?

IV: I was average, but I was really motivated. I worked real hard. That's one of my qualities when it comes to sports. It could be baseball, basketball, soccer, or whatever; I always give 100 percent. So I wasn't the best soccer player, but I played hard and gave it my best.

The Ring: Was your brother a successful amateur?

IV: No. In my case I had 58 fights, all won by knockout, while my brother won around 40 fights and only had 12 knockouts. He wasn't disciplined. He was always partying, chasing women.

PHOTO BY JULIAN ESQUIVEL

He didn't take care of himself. With me, it's different: When there is a fight, I get in a zone and I'm completely focused on the task at hand.

The Ring: Did you win any big amateur tournaments?

IV: No. I only had fights that weren't part of a tournament setting. I entered one tournament, the Golden Gloves, and I was only four ounces over the limit. They wouldn't let me fight in the tournament, but they let me fight that day and I won. It just wasn't part of the tournament. I never won a tournament because I never fought in one.

The Ring: Mexico City produces a lot of good fighters. Did you ever spar or train with any well-known fighters?

IV: My first trainer, Guadalupe Serrano, wasn't famous, but I liked how he trained me. I liked his style. At the time, we were training in the same gym as Chiquita Gonzalez and Miguel Angel Gonzalez, and I watched how they trained. They worked real hard and their intensity was contagious, so I started to train real hard too because I wanted to be a champion like them, and so far that type of work ethic has served me well. My career is going well. Even though I've lost some fights, I've always given my all and I've walked out of every fight with my head held high.

The Ring: Did you realize early on that you were a natural puncher?

IV: It's kind of a funny thing. I asked my father, "Pop, how do you learn how to hit with power?" And he told me, "By training hard." When I was younger, I thought the harder I trained, the harder I would hit, but it's not like that. Someone either has power or they don't; it's something that comes natural. You're born with it. But I still heed by father's advice and train hard. There are a lot of punchers that hit hard and knock a lot of guys out in the first or second round, but if it goes past three or four rounds, they get knocked out. I don't want to be like those guys, so I always train hard.

The Ring: Who managed you when you turned professional in Mexico?

IV: In Mexico your trainer is usually your manager, so Guadalupe Serrano was my manager. Frank [Espinoza] is my manager now and he's doing a great job.

The Ring: When did you meet Frank?

IV: A sportswriter in Mexico City said good things about Frank. He was recruiting fighters from Mexico to bring over here to fight, and he heard about me and was very interested. We met in Tijuana and he made the arrangements so I could come over here to the United States.

The Ring: Was it difficult bringing Israel to the States, Frank?

Frank Espinoza: It really wasn't that expensive. I thought it was worth it. We talked in Tijuana and we kind of

PHOTO BY JULIAN ESQUIVEL

Vazquez and his manager, Frank Espinoza, have been together for almost 10 years. Even when some critics thought he was nothing more than a clubfighter, Espinoza believed Vazquez would become a world champion.

came to some sort of agreement. Top Rank wanted to take a look at him. I first saw Israel on a tape when he knocked out Oscar Larios. He knocked him out in the first round, and I thought, *This kid can really bang.* He had Larios out for about five or 10 minutes. He was so impressive, we brought him out here and Top Rank put him on a card, and he fought a guy named Antonio Ramirez. I think Ramirez' record was 2-10 at the time, and Israel was excited about taking the fight and came out and just wanted to knock him out. But the other guy put up a good fight, and Israel came out a little banged up. I'll never forget because after that fight someone from Top Rank and Cameron Dunkin said, "He's just going to be a clubfighter, send him back to Mexico, I don't think he's going to make it." But my son and I are really close, and we talked a lot and we still believed that he had the tools to be a world champion. It has been a great experience because a lot of people thought he wouldn't be a world champion. This March, it will be 10 years that we've been together!

The Ring: Ulises Flores knocked you out in the first round of your 10th pro fight. Tell us about that fight. Was it a legitimate stoppage?

IV: It was a legitimate loss. Coincidently, Lupe Garcia was the referee for that fight and he always protects the fighters. Sometimes you think you're okay to go ahead with the fight, but he's a safety-first referee. He does his job. When I fought Ulises, he had knocked out my brother in the first round and he hit hard, real hard. They offered me fights with other fighters who weren't as dangerous, and I was like, "No, I want to fight Ulises Flores, that's the fight I want."

When I went into the ring, I wasn't thinking about a winning strategy. I wanted to destroy him. I wanted to avenge my brother's defeat. I think it was around two minutes in when he hit me with a right. Really, it was just that one punch that put me down, but I got up and my head was spinning. The referee let the fight continue, and Flores came at me with a barrage of punches, and just when I was regaining my faculties and about to start punching back, Lupe Garcia stopped the fight. He embraced me and I said, "I'm all right," and he replied, "No, you lost today." He was probably right, but I have a lot of heart and wanted to continue. At the time, I was receiving a lot of attention at the national level and had received an award two years in a row for being the country's best-up-and coming prospect and was probably going to win it a third time, but Ulises took it from me. Oh well, it was something that gave me a lot of experience.

PHOTO BY JULIAN ESQUIVEL

"Even though I've lost some fights, I've always given my all and I've walked out of every fight with my head held high."

The Ring: In 1999, you lost a split decision to Marcos Licona. Tell us about that fight. But don't worry, we're going to start talking about some of your triumphs.

IV: *(laughs)* I think there was a bit of

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Vazquez decks Oscar Larios en route to a third-round TKO in their rubber match, which earned Vazquez THE RING *junior featherweight championship belt. All three of their bouts ended inside the distance and helped establish Vazquez as one of the sport's most exciting fighters.*

favoritism in that fight. I hurt my hand in the fourth round. I thought I had broken it and fought on for eight rounds. I connected with the better punches. He threw a lot, but didn't connect. When he did connect with just one punch in the ninth round, he sent me to the mat, but I got up and I was fine. It was just that I was fighting with one hand, my left. I think the knockdown won it for him; it was a real close fight, a split decision.

The Ring: How many times have you been knocked down?

IV: Five times. Gonzalez two times, Larios once, Ulises Flores, Antonio Ramirez. I think those were the only times I've been on the canvas.

The Ring: You fought a trilogy with Oscar Larios. Tell us about those fights.

IV: The first fight that I had with him came two fights after I had lost my undefeated record and they brought me in as an opponent, as a stepping-stone. Larios was undefeated, 20-0 with 16 knockouts. He had a very impressive record. I had just fought two weeks before. I had knocked out somebody in the third round and was resting, enjoying my victory, when I got a call, "We got you another fight," and I was like, "When is it going to happen?" and he said next Saturday. I told him I hadn't been training, and he said the fight was scheduled for super bantamweight. I had been fighting at 118 pounds. I wasn't really that poor, but I always needed to fight to make money. So I accepted the fight. I didn't know his record or who he had fought against, just his name, Oscar Larios. Then, in a local newspaper, there was a headline, "Israel Vazquez Is Going To Get Pulverized By The Dangerous Oscar Larios." I didn't know how dangerous Larios was. I had only trained a week for the fight, but I felt strong at super bantamweight. When they said his record, I thought, *Damn, what did I get myself into?* My record wasn't that bad; I was 12-1 with 11 knockouts.

When the bell rang, we let it all hang out. Then when I put some distance between us and threw a jab, I put him down. I thought to myself, *This guy can't take it.* I realized that if I pressured him that I could knock him out quickly. He got up, and when I hit him the second time he was out on his feet. I hit him with an uppercut, then a right, then another right, and then I connected again. B*oom!* He hit the floor like a piece of wood. His head bounced off the canvas. It's interesting because they totally overlooked me, but the win helped my career tremendously. I wasn't even highly ranked, and the victory got me ranked nationally.

The Ring: The second Larios fight occurred in 2002, six years after your first encounter. Tell us about that fight.

IV: That fight happened because Willie Jorrin, who was the WBC champion at 122 pounds, didn't want to fight us. Right, Frank?

FE: Jorrin kept avoiding Israel and it got to the point to where we knew he didn't want to fight us, so what they

did was put Israel at number one and Larios number two. At the time, we were training for Jorrin in Big Bear and we thought we were going to fight him. All of a sudden, he's hurt again, so they gave us an option to fight Larios and whoever wins would fight Jorrin for the title. I really didn't want him to take the fight because the fighters we were sparring with weren't the same style as Larios. I told Vazquez, "Don't take the fight. We don't have to take it, just wait." But Vazquez, the warrior that he is, just wants to fight, and he said, "I beat him once and I'll beat him again." So we let him go ahead with it.

IV: I was very confident. The first time we fought, I felt as though I could hurt him easily. But he had studied me and changed his entire strategy. It didn't work out for me that night. My mistake was just trying to land one big punch, while he was landing them the entire fight, hitting me over and over. After 12 rounds, the fight was close. There were almost 3,000 punches thrown during the entire fight, and it was chosen as the fifth best fight in the five years that ESPN2 had been broadcasting fights.

For me, even though I lost, it was an honor to have participated in the bout. The canvas was very slippery, and when he hit me I went back and he thought he had hurt me. I hugged him and told the referee, "It's all wet." I was motioning toward the canvas thinking that Larios wasn't going to hit me, thinking that he would be a good sportsman. But right when I was saying that to the referee, he hit me with a punch. *Boom!* His entire body was behind the punch and he put me down. Truthfully, I was hurt. That punch really hurt me. I wanted to finish the fight on my feet. I didn't want to be humiliated by getting knocked out by a guy that I knocked out in the first round. Again, it was a learning experience and made me realize that I could fight with anybody in the world. Every time I fight, I'm motivated and come out thinking that he's not better than me. Whoever, even when it's a well-known fighter, I always think that.

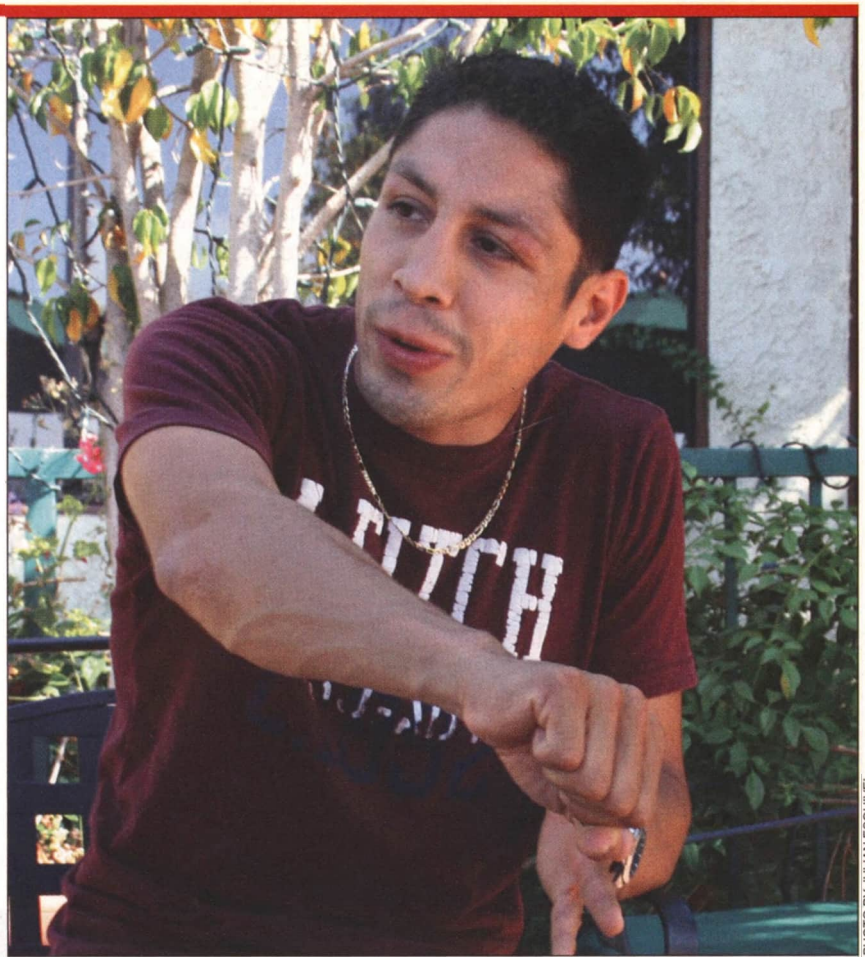

PHOTO BY JULIAN ESQUIVEL

"When I went into the ring, I wasn't thinking about a winning strategy. I wanted to destroy Ulises Flores. I wanted to avenge my brother's defeat. I think it was around two minutes in when he hit me with a right. Really, it was just that one punch that put me down, but I got up and my head was spinning."

That's what always keeps me going.

The Ring: In the third fight, you put Larios down in the first round.

IV: Yah, by then I knew how he was. I had fought him twice already. It had been a while since I had the opportunity to fight for the WBC title and I had become the champion of the IBF. When I connected with an uppercut, he almost went down, and I thought I had to pressure him in order to put him down. I started throwing so many punches, and when Larios went down I didn't even realize he was on the canvas. I threw a punch and the referee broke us apart. I thought, *S___, they are going to disqualify me because he was down.* But, no, they let us continue fighting, and then I threw a jab that opened up a bad cut and the doctor stopped the fight.

The Ring: What happened with the IBF? Why didn't they sanction it as unification since you were the IBF titleholder and he was the WBC titleholder?

FE: It was supposed to be a unification fight, but Larios didn't want to comply with the IBF rule that states that the day of the fight you can't be over the

weight by more than 10 pounds. We complied and he wouldn't, so the IBF title wasn't on the line and we fought for the WBC belt.

The Ring: Why did Israel relinquish the IBF title shortly after winning the rubber match with Larios?

FE: We were willing to fight the number-one guy, but all of a sudden, Steve Molitor, who was ranked number seven, became the mandatory because the other six contenders weren't available. We didn't like that, so we relinquished the title. Plus we won THE RING belt and that's real prestigious. We've got a lot more recognition since we won it.

The Ring: For sure, THE RING is over 85 years old; it's older than the Heisman Trophy.

FE: What I like about it is that there are no sanctioning fees.

The Ring: Did you watch Manny Pacquiao's fight with Larios in July 2006?

IV: I didn't watch it, but I knew Larios would give him a tough fight. I heard it was an interesting fight and Larios had his opportunities to win it, but Manny is a very big puncher, and even though Larios fought well, beating Manny is a very daunting task.

FE: Ramiro Gonzalez, who used to work at *La Opinión* and now works for Golden Boy Promotions, told me that Larios told him that Manny Pacquiao can bang, but that he feels Israel hits harder.

The Ring: Let's talk about the fight with Jhonny Gonzalez. That was a great fight and an incredible comeback because you were beat up and had been down twice.

IV: Even though I went down and might have been down on the cards, I never thought that he was better than me. I was in there trying to hit him, just trying to punch, punch, punch. Sometimes, I don't do it with proper form, but that's my mentality. Supposedly, he dominated the fight, but I thought it was a lot closer. He put me down in the second round, but in the third, fifth, and sixth rounds, I fought well, and, in my opinion, I at least won the third and fifth rounds. But the judges gave all the rounds to him. However, I never gave up the struggle and I knew that at any moment he could fall.

The Ring: It was an awesome fight.

IV: Thank you. Jhonny is a good fighter. He has the height, the reach, good boxing skills; he's a very complete fighter.

FE: I think so too, but I think that fight took a little bit out of him.

IV: Yah, he's not the same fighter.

The Ring: How would you compare Rafael Marquez' power with Gonzalez' and Larios'?

IV: Without a doubt, Rafael hits harder. He hit me with some shots that were really hard, and he's well-trained and always comes in great shape. I'm not going to deny it, in the last fight he hurt me three or four different times, but he didn't realize it, which was better for me. Rafael is a great fighter,

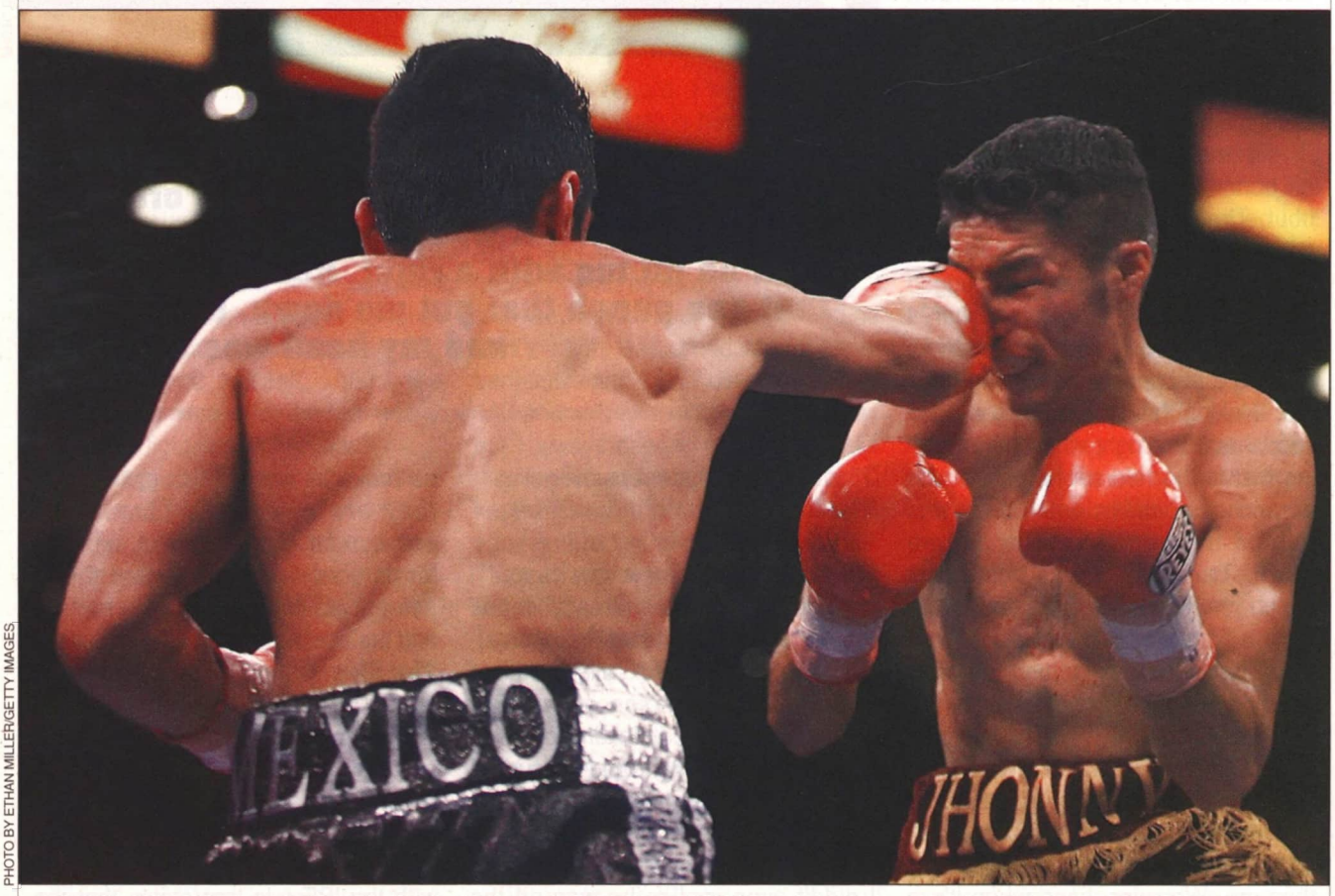

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Jhonny Gonzalez takes a right to the nose during his September 2006 bout with Vazquez at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas. It was a sizzling slugfest in which Vazquez came off the canvas to stop Gonzalez in the 10th round.

and I hope, although not against me, that he wins another championship one day *(laughs)*.

The Ring: In the first fight, Marquez seriously damaged your nose and you stated before the second fight that you would have won if it hadn't been for the injury. Do you really think you would have won that fight if it hadn't been for the injury?

IV: Yes, because I was thinking about defending myself, about trying not to get hit on the nose. And when I thought that and tried to hit him with punches, he would land punches on the nose and it took me out of my concentration because the pain at that moment was very intense. In the fifth round, I was about to stop fighting, but I thought to myself, *He's not going to beat me; he's not better than me.*

So I went out and hurt him and decided to give it a couple of more rounds. But I was hurt and my kids and my wife were there. I was really hurt, and it had been a while since I had been that beaten up and my kids were like, "Pop!" More than anything I thought about my kids. They didn't deserve to see me beat up like that. That's why I stopped fighting. It was the complete opposite of what they said of how I used the injury to my nose as an excuse during the post-fight press conference. All you guys from the press asked me, "How is your nose? How did you feel during the fight?" I didn't use it as an excuse. I went to his corner after the fight and congratulated him and told him, "You beat me." I've always recognized the fact that he beat me. It may have been a lucky punch or it may not have been, but he beat me.

The Ring: How did your nose feel during the fight?

IV: In the first fight it was painful. With the first punch in the first round, my nose started to bleed. I hadn't had a bloody nose for a long time and I had been hit hard on numerous occasions, but during training my nose was bleeding. I didn't pay much attention to it. I think it was during the second round when he broke the little part of my nose that allows you to breathe. I had an injury, a nose injury, a long time ago, and since then I could only breathe through one nostril.

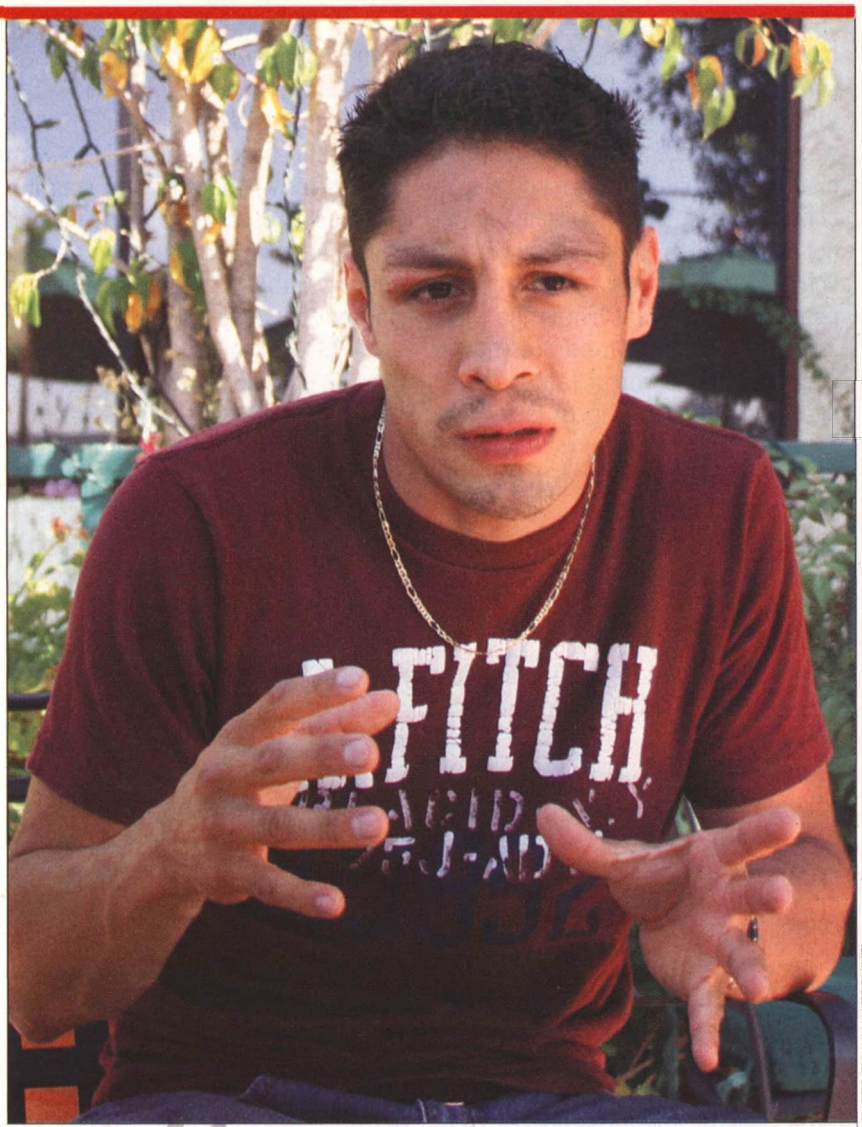

PHOTO BY JULIAN ESQUIVEL

"I'm not going to deny it, in the last fight Rafael Marquez hurt me three or four different times, but he didn't realize it, which was better for me. Rafael is a great fighter, and I hope, although not against me, that he wins another championship one day."

The Ring: Can you still only breathe through one nostril?

IV: Right now I'm okay because of the surgery that Frank set up. I breathe better through both nostrils.

FE: Ten days after the fight we took him to a doctor, a plastic surgeon that we had heard was really good, Robert Kotler, from Beverly Hills. He looked at Israel's nose and said there were prior injuries and that the nose wasn't broken from the outside, but that it was the inside that was damaged and that there were a lot of blood clots. He said 100 percent was closed on one side and 90 percent on the other. He said, "God gave you a nose to breathe, and Israel is not breathing through it. After the surgery it will be like a two-lane highway."

I asked him when Israel could fight again, and he said within five to six

months because his nose wasn't broken. If it had been, we would have had to wait another year. But what he did was take out some cartilage and the blood clots. There were a lot of people criticizing us for taking the fight, but I'm not the type of person to put an injured fighter in the ring. If a fighter isn't 100 percent, I don't want him in the ring. The doctor guaranteed me that it wasn't going to be a factor. Now everybody knows it wasn't a factor.

The Ring: Frank, can you tell me what you guys got for the second Marquez fight?

FE: He got $450,000, plus $50,000 for training expenses.

The Ring: Was that your biggest payday, Israel?

IV: *(laughs)* It was nice and I'm hoping for more. I'm hoping for millions of dollars.

The Ring: You've had quite a few trainers. Tell us about your experiences with them.

IV: When I came to Tijuana, Frank propositioned me to come over here to train, but Lupe Serrano wanted me to stay in Mexico. We negotiated, and Frank gave him some money and he was content, so I came over here. We broke the contract with money. There were no hard feelings.

The first trainer I had here in the United States was Chato Robles, who just passed away the third of March. He was a good trainer, a good friend, and he taught me a lot of things. However, I think it's good to work with different trainers because every trainer has a different philosophy and different methods of training. After some time, we left Chato for Freddie Roach. I had achieved a certain level of success and wanted to move up the ladder another level, and at the time Freddie was having a lot of success and training a lot of good fighters. I learned a lot from him. Unfortunately, he didn't have a lot of time for me and there was a lot of work to be done.

The Ring: When did you start working with Roach?

IV: In 2002, for my fight with Justo Almazan.

The Ring: Justin Fortune ended up taking over the reins from Roach right before the first Marquez fight. What happened?

FE: Justin had been working with Freddie for a long time. He was the conditioning coach, and Freddie didn't have that much time because he was working with Oscar De La Hoya on that tour or something to that effect, which kind of took us a little bit off-guard. It was too close to that fight, so we stayed with Justin Fortune because Israel already felt comfortable with him.

The Ring: It was reported that Roach said you should have taken some more time off and that you were starting to slur your words. Did you hear about that?

IV: Yah, I heard it. But Freddie has always been a good friend and I don't want to believe that Freddie would say that. Somehow, someone misinterpreted him. I have a lot of respect for Freddie.

The Ring: Have you spoken to Freddie about it?

IV: I haven't because Freddie was training Bernard Hopkins and he was very busy.

The Ring: You're now training with Rudy Perez, Marco Antonio Barrera's trainer. Are you happy with him?

IV: Of course, he taught me a lot in six weeks.

The Ring: Do you still feel strong at 122 pounds?

IV: For sure, I feel real good, but I want to move up to 126 pounds and win my second world title. If everything goes well and I'm successful at 126, I want to move up to 130 pounds and win my third world title and try to make history by becoming the fourth Mexican fighter to win titles in three different weight classes—Julio Cesar Chavez, Marco Antonio Barrera, Erik Morales, and me *(smiles)*.

The Ring: Where do you train?

IV: One time, for the second Larios fight, Frank sent me to Big Bear, but it really wasn't advantageous to my training and it really didn't yield any results. It didn't bring about the concentration that it was supposed to. Since then, I've concentrated by staying at home with my wife and kids.

The Ring: How long are your training camps?

IV: For a 10-rounder I train six weeks and for a 12-rounder I train eight weeks.

The Ring: What's your walking around weight?

IV: I take care of myself, and I'm very careful. I never go past 136 pounds, and when I start training hard, I quickly drop down to 130 pounds, and from there I have to work. I don't want to get up to 150 pounds and have to train to lose weight and not for the fight. So I always stay slender.

The Ring: What's your training schedule like?

IV: I wake up and train at 9:30 a.m., but right at the moment I'm studying English. I want to perfect the little English that I know *(laughs)*. I'm always thinking about the future, so I train an hour-and-a-half or two hours, and get back around 12 noon to eat lunch, usually something small. Then I watch television and go running. When I start training, I run for 15 or 20 minutes, and as my training progresses, the amount of time that I run increases up to around 50 minutes to an hour. After running, I relax, play with my kids, talk with my parents.

The Ring: Obviously, the third fight between you and Marquez is the fight on your mind right now, but who would you like to fight, given the opportunity?

IV: Manny Pacquiao. I'm Mexican and some way or another, in a sporting sense, I want to avenge what he has done to all the Mexican fighters. He's a great fighter, but Israel Vazquez needs the opportunity to avenge those victories over Mexicans.

The Ring: Who's your favorite Mexican fighter?

IV: Julio Cesar Chavez and Marco Antonio Barrera, even though I would like him to give me the opportunity to fight him.

The Ring: Who are the best fighters in Mexican history?

IV: Pipino Cuevas, Lupe Pintor, Carlos Zarate, and Julio Cesar Chavez. There have been a lot, but there haven't been any as famous and acclaimed as those.

The Ring: Boxing in the United States isn't as popular as it used to be. Why is that?

IV: I think, before, people followed boxing more because the fighters took risks. They had the mentality where they always wanted to achieve something, conquer something. Now, even though I'm a fighter, it's all about marketing. The fighters become superstars and they just want to go in the ring and run around. They don't want to take risks or get beat up, so they can end their careers in good health. Even though they are good fighters, they fight without risking anything and still earn a lot of money. In order to achieve something special, you have to take risks.

The Ring: How closely do you follow boxing?

IV: I like watching up-and-coming guys in four- or six-round fights because they're hungry and will sacrifice to get what they want, while the big-name fighters don't like to take risks.

The Ring: Do you have any hobbies?

IV: Not really, I almost never go out. There are very few people that I consider to be friends. I don't have a lot of friends. I can count them on one hand. Enrique Sanchez, an ex-fighter, is one of them,.

The Ring: What about Martin Castillo? You guys both have the same manager. I interviewed Martin, and he told me he runs something like 10 miles in an hour.

IV: *(smiles)* Yah, he's a good friend. I've run with him, and he runs real fast, through mountains and everything. I haven't talked to him much lately. I recently bought a house here in California and I have to make money to pay for it.

The Ring: When did you buy it?

IV: Two years ago. I want to start buying land and properties. I want to open up a gym. I don't want be a landlord and rent to people, too many headaches, too many problems trying to get the rent checks from people who don't want to pay.

The Ring: California is so expensive that an average home is at least a half-a-million. Have you ever thought about going back to Mexico? Your money would go so much farther there.

IV: I'm Mexican and very proud to be Mexican, but all the opportunity to progress and move forward is here in the U.S., and a lot of Mexicans come here to better themselves because the situation in Mexico isn't very good. Fortunately, I am able to go there by plane and come back by plane. I can come and go as I please. My children's future is here in the United States. I'm not here for myself, but I'm making a life here for my children. I know that in Mexico, with the money that I make here, I would be rich. But I wouldn't have the security that I have here or the different opportunities. I don't want to say anything bad about Mexico, but that's why I'm here.

The Ring: How much longer do you want to fight?

IV: I'm only 29, so I can probably fight for three or four more years. If there are some good offers and some big fights, maybe I'll only fight for another year or two. ■

PHOTO BY JULIAN ESQUIVEL

"I want to move up to 126 pounds and win my second world title. If everything goes well and I'm successful at 126, I want to move up to 130 pounds and win my third world title and try to make history by becoming the fourth Mexican fighter to win titles in three different weight classes."

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

CONTENDER STAR

ALFONSO GOMEZ

His Only Fear Is Going Back To His Old Life

By William Dettloff

Some fighters gain the love of millions because they are themselves inside the ring, where nothing can be hidden, and are expert at hiding who they are outside of it, where whole industries are built around obscuring reality. Julio Cesar Chavez and Mike Tyson come quickly to mind. Others are loved as much for their social and political accomplishments as for their pugilistic ones. Muhammad Ali and Joe Louis are prime examples. Still others are dipped in whatever the magic elixir is that makes some men excel both in life and in the ring, their skill matched only by their charisma and their charisma matched only by their skill: Ray Charles Leonard and Oscar De La Hoya.

Alfonso Gomez, who we imagine will have beaten the well-worn Ben Tackie by the time you read this, is not likely to make anyone forget Tyson or Chavez or Ali or Louis or Leonard or De La Hoya. Hell, he might not make anyone for-

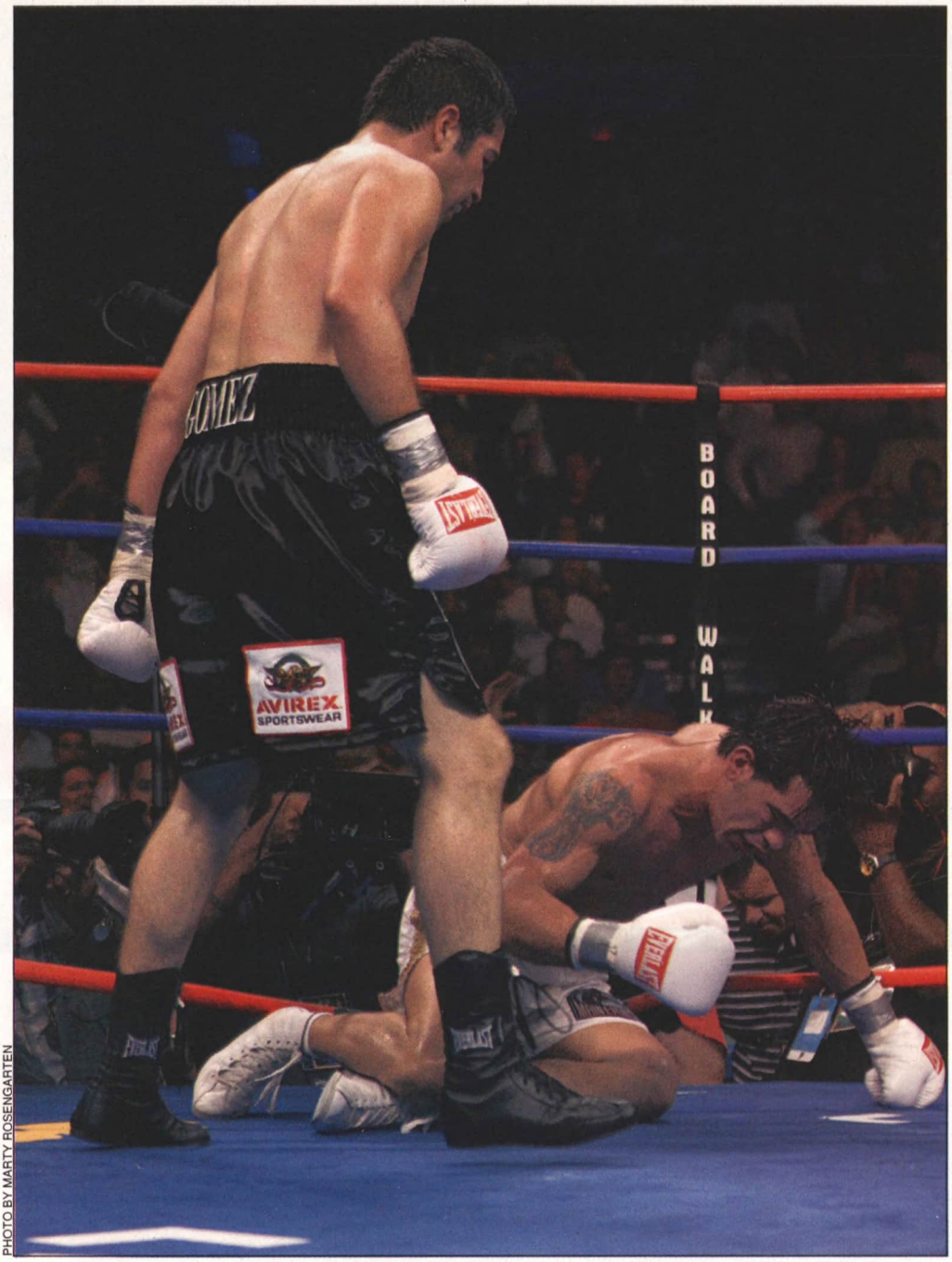

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Gomez watches Gatti crumble to the canvas in the seventh round of their July 2007 bout in Atlantic City. "I have to look spectacular because now I have to get the people to believe in me," said Gomez of the biggest win of his career.

get Grady Brewer by the time the dust has all settled. But he is making his mark today not only as a fighter who is as eminently likable outside the ring as is any fighter of his era, but also as a guy who can fight a bit after all. And not just for a guy from *The Contender* TV show—but for a fighter. His win over Arturo Gatti in July suggested he is not quite the reality-show creation some in the fight business would prefer him to be, and also that he is possessed of a coolness in the ring few would associate with his cuddly, aw shucks humility. The manner in which he dispatched Gatti, whose autograph he asked for (and received) in the run-up to the fight, implied a fighter who, like most other fighters, has some demons with which he is dealing. Nice boys don't do what he did to Gatti.

"No, I have no demons," Gomez told THE RING. "But I grew up poor, in a poor neighborhood. I saw our family lose our car because we couldn't afford it, saw us get kicked out of our house and go through foreclosure. Remembering that motivates me because I don't want to live like that ever again." That fear is a demon of sorts, the same one that drives some men into prisons and crack houses, but others into gyms and boxing rings and schools and careers. Gomez doesn't realize that not all demons are bad.

"Beating Arturo Gatti makes me even more determined than I was, because being rich and successful and a champion used to seem so far away," he said. "Now it's so much closer so I don't want to go back to the way it was. I have to dedicate myself 100 percent because every victory brings me closer to what I have been looking for. I have to look spectacular because now I have to get the people to believe in me. I don't have demons, but I have a lot of motivation. If I mess up now, I go back to where I started, and I don't want to do that."

That cash-starved past is not as far back as you think. Gomez made $350,000 by beating Jesse Brinkley in *The Contender* Season One semifinal, but went through it quickly. The Gatti fight put him back on his feet financially, but for a while it was like he was a kid back in Mexico again—and not in a good way.

"I learned a hard lesson about money," he said. "Because I wasn't used to having money, because I had never had any before, I just spent it. I bought myself a nice house, bought my mother a nice house, bought myself a hot Chrysler. I thought the money I made that first year of *The*

PHOTO BY GIULIO MARCOCCHI/GETTY IMAGES

Executive Producer Jeff Wald talks things over with actor Sylvester Stallone during a casting call for the first season of The Contender. *Wald said the Gomez was the most popular cast member from the start.*

Contender would just always be there, but it wasn't. Right before the Gatti fight, I was in real financial trouble. If I had known then what I know now, I probably could have doubled that money, but because I had never had money before, I didn't know what to do with it other than spend it. I won't make that mistake again."

That he has a chance to make it again—indeed, that we know him at all—is due in large measure to the very first *Contender* episode, when he shocked his teammates and most of the viewing audience by calling out tournament favorite Peter Manfredo. It was one of the best moments of the first season and went a long way toward establishing Gomez as a fan favorite and also toward revealing something about his character.

"Out of all the fighters we've had on *The Contender*, he was the most popular from Day One," said Gomez' promoter Jeff Wald, who is also the show's executive producer. "Everybody loves him, and not just fight fans. I'll give you an example: During that first season of *The Contender*, my wife would take my daughter to school, and all the women there, all these 30- and 40-year-old women, would talk about Alfonso and how much they loved him.

"Look at what he did that year," Wald continued. "He was an alternate, wasn't expected to do anything. And what does he do? Challenges Manfredo, in his first fight, the guy everybody expects to go all the way. And he beats his ass. He beat him with balls, smarts, and skills."

It is among Gomez' favorite memories from his time on the series and he loves to tell the story.

"Going into *The Contender,* I knew a lot of the guys, but I didn't know Peter Manfredo," he said. "I knew Ishe Smith because I had fought him, and I knew some of the other guys from seeing them around. But I didn't know anything about Manfredo. All the other guys were afraid of him. Everyone thought Ishe Smith was the best guy on our team and Manfredo was the best guy on their team. I saw him train and work out and I could see he was strong, but I believed I was the best fighter there. At the moment we were going to decide who was going to fight who, Joey Gilbert on our team

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

In his first bout after the end of the first season of The Contender, *Gomez pounded out an easy fourth-round TKO of Luciano Perez at the Staples Center in Los Angeles. Although not considered a big puncher, Gomez has stopped four of his five most recent opponents.*

was so afraid to fight that I just volunteered to fight Manfredo. I didn't want my team to lose the first fight and I wanted to prove I was the best fighter there. My teammates didn't want me to, except for Ishe, who told me I could win. But that was one of the best decisions I ever made."

But to every upside there is a downside too. Gomez, like many of his *Contender* alumni, has struggled against the perception that he has gotten more exposure and money than his talents deserve, and that he and the other *Contender* fighters, and the show itself, are neither good for the sport nor representative of how it really operates. Indeed, you would not have to work terribly hard to find someone in the industry to agree with the assertion that Gomez is little more than a likable clubfighter. It's a characterization that makes Wald bristle.

"This clubfighter stuff pisses me off. Go back and listen to what Emanuel Steward, who has no love for *The Contender*, said about Alfonso after the Gatti fight. He said Alfonso would have beaten Gatti in his prime. Gatti still had skills in that fight, he was still a warrior and he had no quit in him, and Alfonso did everything right. He fought Gatti smart."

Still, Wald doesn't appear in any great rush to move Gomez, 17-3-2 (8), up the ladder unless he sees a style matchup he likes. He acknowledges he wouldn't have taken the fight with Kermit Cintron had Gomez, and not Jesse Feliciano (with whom Gomez has a 1-1-1 series going) been offered it because of the "size difference" and what he sees as Cintron's limited drawing power. But Gomez "has the potential to go the distance," Wald said. "Do I want him to fight Paul Williams right now? Probably not. But I'd love a fight with Ricky Hatton. Or Paul Malignaggi. I'd like Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. too."

Indeed, had Gatti beaten Gomez, Chavez was next for him. Gomez ruined that and said afterward that he'd like to take Gatti's place against the son of Mexico's greatest-ever fighter. "There's been a lot of talk, but he hasn't fought the level of competition that Alfonso has fought," said Wald. "But Chavez in Los Angeles would mean something. That would be big. With his fans out there, and the fans we would bring in, it would be big."

Such a matchup would clearly be the biggest of Gomez' career, but would not cause him to lose any sleep. He claims to be one of those rare fighters who never gets nervous before fights, never has to battle back the anxiety-driven nausea that visits even the greatest fighters in their dressing rooms. Talking to him, seeing how he carries himself, watching how relaxed he is in the ring, you believe him when he tells you. He has no reason to lie.

"I'm never scared. I think, what is the worst that can happen? I lose? I've lost before. I can handle it. There will be other fights. I get knocked out? So what. I just go in there and do my thing. And I know it'll be all right because I've dedicated myself 100 percent in the gym. I was only nervous before a fight once in my life:

PHOTO BY MATTHEW LEWIS/GETTY IMAGES

Gomez traveled to Newcastle, England, in late-March 2007 with a team of* Contender *alumni to tangle with a group of British fighters. In his bout, Gomez stopped Martin Conception in the seventh round in what proved to be an excellent tune-up for Gatti.

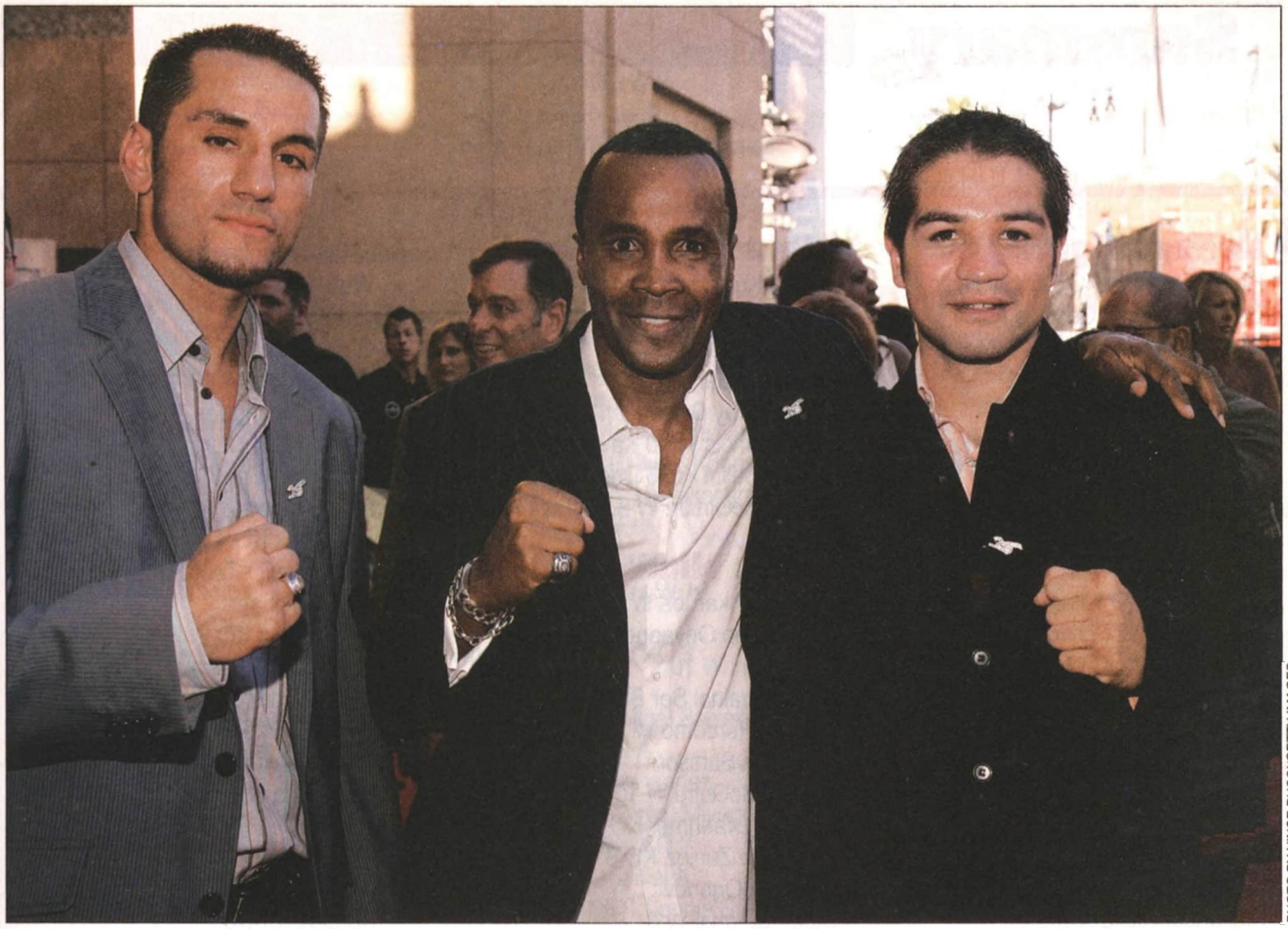

PHOTO BY VINCE BUCCI/GETTY IMAGES

The celebrity life continued for Gomez when he attended the 2006 ESPY Awards in Hollywood, along with fellow* Contender *Sergio Mora (far left) and the show's host, Sugar Ray Leonard. All he has to do now is continue to prove himself in the ring.

against Jesse Brinkley in *The Contender* finale because I knew what was at stake: The winner was getting $350,000 and the loser $100,000. That made me nervous. But other than that, never."

That wouldn't surprise Gomez' manager, Gary Gittelsohn, who says Gomez is "extremely confident and knows his place in the world." Like Wald, Gittelsohn believes it was Gomez' decision to challenge Manfredo that set him apart from the other contestants on the show and continues to set him apart today.

"He made a tremendous statement when he did that," Gittelsohn said. "It showed he believed in himself enough to call out the favorite of the group when he didn't have to, and really endeared him to the viewers. It made him the fan favorite."

That confidence is what Gomez believes makes him likable and approachable. He's always had it, both in and out of the ring. "I'm upbeat all the time, I like to laugh," he said. "I didn't get into all the drama on *The Contender*, and people saw that. It's always been like that. I may not be the best-looking guy, but because I'm confident and don't care, the girls like me. I wasn't the most popular kid in school, but in every gym I've ever been in everybody liked me and liked my style, liked the way I fought. I've only had 20 fights and 12 or 13 of those fights have been the best fight of the night even though they weren't the main event."

It's not a stretch to predict that Gomez' personality will bring him success after his fighting days are over. He graduated with a B.A. in Music Engineering from the Musicians Institute in Hollywood and has a studio in his home, where his brothers, who have a band, record their music. He's interested in acting and has other interests outside the ring and will pursue them some day, one assumes with the same humble confidence with which he enters the ring. He credits his parents with instilling in him the confidence to believe he could do whatever he wanted with his life.

"From the time we were little kids my parents always planted the seeds of success in our heads. They always told us we could be whatever we wanted to be in this world, that being poor was temporary and someday we'd have everything we ever wanted," Gomez said. "They said, 'You can do everything you want' and we started believing it, and once you believe it, you can go ahead and do it. I thought everyone believed that; that everyone dreamed of being successful and famous and having money, but I found that's not the case. Not all parents teach their kids that. We were very lucky that our parents did."

It's hard to say how far Gomez will go in this hard business. However far it is, it'll be awfully hard not to root for him as he tries to prove his parents right. ■

[Summary]

Heavyweights

Hasim Rahman KO 2 Dicky Ryan
David Tua KO 2 Cerrone Fox
Michael Grant KO 7 Kevin Montiy
Israel Carlos Garcia KO 2
Mike Jones
Bowie Tupou KO 4 John Clark
Marcos Celestino KO 4
Albertino Mota Pinheiro
Albert Sosnowski KO 2
Manuel Pucheta
Brian Minto KO 1 Ray Lunsford
Joey Abell KO 1 Levon Warner
Jae-Chan Kim KO 1 Je-Woong Sung

Cruiserweights

Stefan Raaff W 12 Mehmet Altintas
Johny Jensen W 12 Lou Del Valle
Jason Robinson KO 5 Terry Porter
Tavoris Cloud KO 5
Jose Luis Herrera
Alexander Alexeev KO 4
Darrin Humphrey
Bobby Gunn KO 2
Benito Fernandez
Andres Aricaye Franco KO 1
Juan Rivas
Alfredo Escalera W 8 Harvey Jolley
Daniel Judah W 6 Charles Davis

Light Heavyweights

Aleksy Kuziemski KO 12
Julio Dominguez
DeAndrey Abron W 12
Shane Benfield
Tony Oakey D 12 Brian Magee
Denis Simcic W 10 Kavin Gebhard
Djamel Selini KO 6 Dries Kumpen
James McGirt Jr. W 8 Thomas Reid

Super Middleweights

Roman Shkarupa W 12
Samson Onyango
Israel Kani W 10
Yodchainoi Sor Samakkee
Gusmyl Perdomo W 10
Dimitri Sartison
Steven McGuire W 10 Nathan King
Juergen Braehmer KO 4 Mario Veit
Fulgencio Zuniga KO 9
Victor Oganov
Baker Barakat W 8
Ommid Mostaghim

Middleweights

Ben Crampton W 12
Dechapon Suwannalert
Jamie Pittman W 12
Tshepo Mashego
Sebastien Demers W 12
Walid Smichet
Junior Talipeau W 10
George Livaditis
Francisco Mora W 10
Jorge Dominguez
Andy Lee KO 4 Ciaran Healy
Matthew Macklin KO 4
Darren Rhodes
Pawel Wolak KO 4 Dan Wallace
Shannan Taylor Tech. Draw 1
Sonni Michael
Alfredo Angulo KO 2
Emmanuel Gonzalez
Shadrack Kipruto KO 2
Stephen Esonga
Yuzo Kiyota KO 2
Chokchana Sithkrupon

Junior Middleweights

Yory Boy Campas W 10
Norberto Bravo
Luciano Cuello W 12
Americo Sagania
Eddie Delic W 10
Edgar Wymarra
Mark Lloyd W 10 Vladimir Borovski
Michael Medina W 12 Rogelio Sanchez
James Kirkland KO 2
Mohammad Said
Daniel Dawson KO 1 Anton Solopov
Sebastian Lujan W 10 Arnaldo Rios
Yuki Nonaka W 10
Shinji Akazawa
Alphonso Williams KO 3 Derek Ennis
Julio Perez KO 3 Adan Leal
Hassan Matumla KO 3 Francis Suba
Marcelo Rodriguez KO 1
Rogerio Nunes
Evans Ashira KO 2
Ian MacKillop
Karolina Lukasik KO 8
Gabriela Zapata

Welterweights

Zab Judah W 10 Edwin Vazquez
Shamone Alvarez W 12
Germaine Sanders
Kevin Anderson KO 12 Francis Jones
Oscar Samudio KO 3

PHOTO BY DWIGHT MCCANN/FIGHTWIREIMAGES

Lightweight Nick Casal pegs Antonio DeMarco

Roberto Galarza
Victor Ortiz KO 10 Emmanuel Clottey
Mike Alvarado KO 8
Jorge Alberto Padilla
Mike Jones KO 5 Martinus Clay
Andrei Rimer KO 3 Oliver Guettel
Delvin Rodriguez KO 2
Keenan Collins
Leonard Bundu KO 1 Vincenzo Finzi
Koshinmaru Saito W 8
Yoshihisa Tonimura

Junior Welterweights

Junior Witter KO 7 Vivian Harris
(*Retains WBC Title*)
Ricardo Torres KO 11 Kendall Holt
Daisuke Hata D 10
Kenryo Matsumoto
Billy Smith W 10 Carl Allen
Lamont Peterson KO 6
Frankie Santos
Juan Urango KO 4 Nasser Athumani
Carlos Vilches KO 2 Juan Alderete
Pipino Cuevas Jr. KO 2
Genaro Garcia
Sergey Sorokin W 12
Emanuel Augustus
Verquan Kimbrough W 12
Rodney Jones
Juaquin Gallardo W 12 Lenin Arroyo
Dennis Laurente W 10 Shinya Nagase
Anthony Peterson W 8 Marteze Logan
Breidis Prescott KO 9 Jose Julio
Martin Coggi KO 2 Alejandro Ciacia
Mkwanda Matumla KO 1 Deo Njiku
Paul McCloskey W 8 W Alfredo Di Feto

Lightweights

Jose Reyes W 12 Silverio Ortiz
Aldo Nazareno W 12 Diego Alzugaray
Azad Azizov W 12
Johannes Fabrizius
Miguel Huerta W 12
Efren Hinojosa
Cesar Soto W 10
Hector Javier Marquez
Fernando Trejo W 10
Juan Ramon Cruz
Martin Gethin W 10 Craig Johnson
Vicente Rodriguez W 10
Hugo Fernandez
Antonio DeMarco W 10 Nick Casal
Randy Suico KO 8 Koji Samejima
Daniel Dorrego KO 5
Ricardo Chamorro
Lee Meager KO 4 Laszlo Komjathi
Wes Ferguson KO 2 Sammy Ventura
Tiberiu Ciubotaru W 8
Lubos Priehradnik
Jorge Teron W 8 Mike Gonzalez

Junior Lightweights

Mzonke Fana KO 9
Javier Osvaldo Alvarez
(*Retains IBF Title*)
Humberto Soto KO 3 Ismael Gonzalez
Roman Martinez KO 12
Daniel Jimenez
Ryota Kajiki W 10 Yusuke Uehara
Hero Bando W 10 Ikuto Kobayashi
Yusuke Kobori W 10 Takashi Miura
Yoshio Kojima W 10
Hiroshi Katayama
Guadalupe Rosales W 10
Marcos Licona
Takashi Uchiyama KO 8
Nedal Hussein
Martin Fing KO 5 Abel Berrelleza
Adrian Valdez KO 4
Julio Cesar Hernandez
Jimrex Jaca KO 2 Ryu Miyagi
Fernando da Silva KO 2
Everaldo De Oliveira
Mario Juarez KO 1 Lonnie Smith

Featherweights

Hiroyuki Enoki W 12 Makyo Sugita
Rashad Ismayilov W 12 Josef Holub
Jose Hernandez D 12
Johnnie Edwards
Wonga Lobese W 10 Phumlani Sitali
Fahsai Sakkreerin KO 7
Roberto Dalisay
John Simpson KO 7 Andy Morris
Edel Ruiz KO 5 Marcos Leonardo
Antonio Escalante KO 5 Feider Viloria
Carlos Yanez KO 3 Genaro Camargo

Junior Featherweights

Somsak Sithchatchawal KO 2
Indonesian Hendric
Poonsawat Kratingdaenggym KO 4
Jack Asis
Kiko Martinez KO 1 Bernard Dunne
Eduardo Lazcano W 10
Salvador Sanchez
Jackie Nava W 10 Donna Biggers

Bantamweights

Shota Terabatake KO 10
Konosuke Tomiyama
Abner Mares KO 7 Isidro Garcia
Vusi Malinga KO 5 Alberto Rossel
Tabtimdaeng Na Rachawat KO 4
Gun Tinular
Yonnhy Perez KO 2 Antonio Cochero
Eddy Julio D 10 Benjamin Rivas
Esmeralda Moreno KO 8
Magaly Avalos

Junior Bantamweights

Jorge Arce KO 6 Tomas Rojas
Katsushige Kawashima W 10
Adi Wiguna
Pramuansak Posuwan W 12
Nouldy Manakane
Juan Alberto Rosas W 12
Valerio Sanchez
Evans Mbamba KO 11
Pedro Cardenas
Alesia Graf W 10 Zulina Munoz
Andy Bell KO 7 Robert Nelson
Caril Herrera KO 1 Nelson Monte
Takeshi Honda W 8 Hiroaki Kusunoki

Flyweights

Omar Narvaes KO 4 Marlon Marquez
Brahim Asloum KO 9
Wellington Vicente
Yo-Sam Choi W 12
Terdkiat Jandaeng
Denkaosan Singwancha W 12
Richie Mepranum
Wyndel Janiola W 10
Hiroyuki Hisataka
Jin-Ki Jung W 10 Kyung-Jin Son
Panomroonglek Kratingdaenggym KO 6
Lopez Dalada
Carlos Rodriguez KO 6 Victor Rojas
Susi Kentikian KO 3 Shanee Martin
Tomoya Kaneshiro KO 2
Yun Woo Kim

Junior Flyweights

Ivan Calderon W 12 Hugo Cazares
(*Wins World Title*)
Edgar Sosa KO 9 Lorenzo Trejo
(*Retains WBC Title*)
Joo-Hee Kim KO 7 Yuki Sakurada
Francisco Soto KO 3
Esteban Jimenez

Strawweights

Yutaka Niida W 12 Eriberto Gejon
(*Retains WBA Title*)
Cho-Rong Son W 10 Lin Jin Mei
Cesar Canchila KO 4
Michael Arango

Ivan Calderon W 12 Hugo Cazares

Bayamon, Puerto Rico: For fans of the littlest of little guys, it doesn't get much bigger than this, having THE RING champion at junior flyweight defend against the number-one rated strawweight in the world. And, in what looked like a highly intriguing matchup on paper, champion Cazares and challenger Calderon didn't disappoint, producing a compelling southpaw vs. southpaw, boxer vs. puncher affair that came right down to the championship rounds.

Early on at Coliseo Ruben Rodriguez, it was all Calderon, 107, Guaynabo, Puerto Rico, using his elusiveness to frustrate Cazares, 107¾, Los Mochis, Mexico. Cazares was making his second defense of THE RING title and his sixth defense of the WBO belt, and was said to have had major difficulty making weight. Rumors had him entering the ring at about 130 pounds, and while there was an obvious size advantage, the Mexican also seemed a bit sluggish early. Or perhaps Calderon's slick moves just made him look that way. "Iron Boy" won probably five or six of the first seven rounds, and even scored with a left in the fifth that appeared to make the defending champ touch the canvas with his glove, though referee Jose H. Rivera (Puerto Rico) declined to issue a count.

In round eight, however, the one-sided boxing lesson suddenly gave way to serious drama. After round after round of chasing and missing, Cazares, 29, finally caught up with his foe, hurting him with a combination and eventually finding the punches to put him down. Calderon, 32, was not only dazed, he was growing tired as well, and his focus in rounds nine and 10 was survival, nothing more.

With two rounds to go, the 108-pound championship was up for grabs, but Calderon found his second wind in the 11th, while all the rounds of chasing the little lefty caught up with Cazares, 25-4-1 (19). Iron Boy controlled the final two frames to secure the victory.

Judge Jose Roberto Torres (Puerto Rico) surprisingly scored in favor of Cazares, 116-111. But judges Valerie Dorsett (USA) and Ruben Garcia (USA) both saw it 115-112 for Calderon, who improved to 29-0 (6) with the career-best win.

Television: **Dish Network Pay-Per-View**
Promoter: **Puerto Rico Best Boxing**
(8-25-07)

PHOTO BY SUMIO YAMADA

Calderon fires a right at Cazares

Roman Martinez KO 12 Daniel Jimenez

Bayamon, Puerto Rico: If Calderon-Cazares proved sufficiently interesting, the co-featured bout at Coliseo Ruben Rodriguez, between Puerto Rican junior lightweight prospects Martinez and Jimenez, provided fans with a true show-stealing thriller. Back and forth they went for 11 scintillating rounds, until unbeaten 24-year-old Martinez handed the 26-year-old Jimenez his second career loss with a final-round stoppage.

The first two rounds belonged to Jimenez, 129, but in the third, "Rocky" Martinez, 129½, began letting his hands go, and the war was on. The crowd went berserk during a spectacular exchange in the sixth, which ended with Martinez hurting Jimenez. So "Azuquita" got back to boxing and won the seventh round, only to see Martinez re-apply the pressure and carry the eighth.

With his eyes swollen, Martinez, 17-0-1 (10), struggled in the ninth and was outboxed, but the 10th was more to his liking, as he lured Jimenez into a toe-to-toe slugfest that again ignited the crowd, prompting chants of "Roc-

ky! Roc-ky!" By the start of the 12th, Jimenez, 17-2-1 (10), was completely exhausted, and Martinez seized the opportunity, scoring two knockdowns and forcing ref Luis Pabon (Puerto Rico) to call a halt at 1:01 of the round. At the time of the stoppage, two of the Puerto Rican judges, Cesar Ramos and Nelson Vazquez, had Martinez up by a single point, 105-104, while the third, Jose Roberto Torres, had Jimenez on top by that same score, 105-104.

It was that kind of fight.

Television: **Dish Network Pay-Per-View**
Promoter: **Puerto Rico Best Boxing**
(8-25-07)

Junior Witter KO 7 Vivian Harris

Doncaster, England: With a consummate display that combined power and authority with the elusiveness that is his forte, Witter, 139½, Bradford, England, dominated and destroyed Harris, 139½, Brooklyn, New York, via Georgetown, Guyana, retaining the WBC super lightweight title by seventh-round stoppage. It was a strong statement in a division in which Ricky Hatton, the authentic champion, has yet to meet Witter's challenge. Despite the undoubted legitimacy of Witter's credentials, however, a match between these two Britons seems destined never to be made.

Hatton, of course, will challenge world welterweight champion and pound-for-pound king Floyd Mayweather in December at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas in the biggest bout of his career. Whether he will entertain an encounter with Witter some time next year—which Witter hopes will be the case—depends largely on the outcome of his showdown with Mayweather. Regardless, Witter is doing all that he can to uphold his end of any future deal. Having won the vacant belt against DeMarcus Corley in September 2006, Witter has successfully defended twice, and his demolition job on Harris strengthened his status as the top contender for Hatton's world junior welterweight title. His solitary defeat against Zab Judah in June 2000, when he accepted the challenge on two weeks' notice, is a distant memory now and Witter, unquestionably, is a more formidable exponent of his art.

Witter, 33, landed the first serious punch against Harris, a right to the jaw, but the opening round, as anticipated, was circumspect. The 29-year-old Harris was controlled and reluctant to commit, unable to get his jab going because of Witter's slippery movement. With a left hook and right that landed on Harris' temple, Witter closed the round strongly and, after switching to southpaw early in round two, he began to open up more liberally. Witter's edge in speed meant that he was getting his punches off first, and Harris continued to struggle to

[The Ring Fighter of the Month]

Ivan Calderon

There's a belief among some in boxing that punchers are born, and boxers are made. When you watch Ivan Calderon, however, it's hard not to be convinced that this is a man who was born to box.

The Puerto Rican "Iron Boy" can't punch even a little bit, but he makes up for it with boxing skills few can equal. Yes, much of it was learned in the gym, but some of it requires talents you just can't teach. How slick is he? Slick enough to move up from 105 pounds and immediately challenge Hugo Cazares, the junior flyweight champion of the world, in his first fight at 108 pounds, and win despite the fact that only one man in the ring was capable of hurting the other, and Calderon wasn't on the happy side of that equation.

Calderon had run his record to 28-0 without ever facing an elite foe, but for his 29th fight, he stepped up big time, giving up size while taking on the best opponent of his career. He never had a shot at Fighter of the Month before this, because he never put himself in a situation where winning would mean all that much. But in August, he put himself in the right kind of challenging situation—and he came away with the right kind of result, winning a deserved split decision, The Ring championship, and a victory for guys everywhere who were born not to punch, but to box.

PHOTO BY SUMIO YAMADA

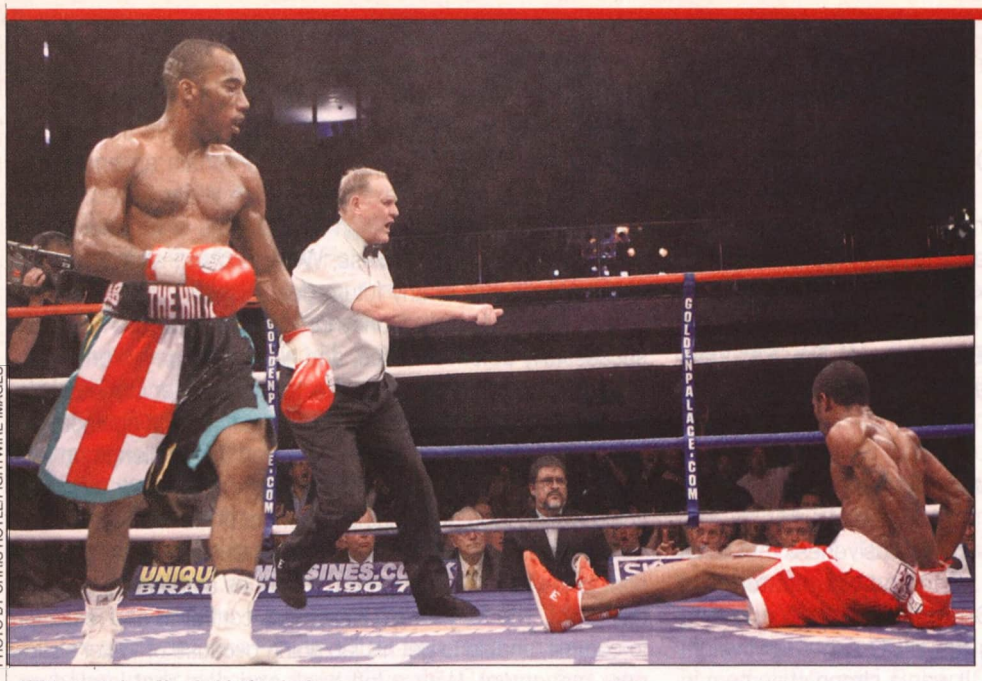

PHOTO BY CHRIS ROYLE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Witter watches Harris hit the deck

find his rhythm. A hard left hook and a right hand moments later connected with Harris' jaw before, finally, Harris, 28-3-1 (18), the former WBA titleholder, scored with an almost perfect right-hand counter just before the bell that caused Witter's knees to dip. Still, it was the Englishman's round.

The pair continued to trade in the third with hard shots, though Witter's elusiveness negated the challenger's power and his own punches continually had an impact, particularly his left hook, which Harris failed to defend effectively all night. They both landed left hooks almost simultaneously early in the fourth, and Harris followed up with two more that backed Witter into a neutral corner. But the British boxer retained his composure and shook Harris with a right hand that sent him over, though Belgian referee Daniel Van de Wiele ruled it a slip. Moments later, however, Harris was floored legitimately by a left hook and a right on the top of his head on the way down. Harris was hurt and could not disguise his discomfort.

Bravely, he dug in his heels over the next couple of rounds, but Witter's superiority was pronounced and, increasingly, Harris became more ragged. At no point was he able to exert the kind of sustained pressure that might effect a turnaround, though in the sixth he was able to land several blows to win the round. He began the seventh well too, landing a left and right on Witter's jaw, but a hard right counter hurt Harris, as did a left hook, as he followed Witter across the ring. Witter spun off the ropes and landed another left hook immediately that sent Harris sprawling, the gumshield flying out of his mouth. Clearly disorientated, he never tried to climb off the canvas and the referee counted him out at 1:00 of round seven.

"I'm ecstatic, that was a hell of a performance. I hit him with some serious powershots and the finish was sweet," said Witter, 35-1-2 (20). "It's been frustrating for me for a lot of years that I haven't received the credit I feel I deserve, but all I can do is keep on winning and maybe a fight with Ricky Hatton will come."

Promoter Mick Hennessy declared that he would look for an alphabet unification bout against IBF titleholder Paulie Malignaggi instead. "Paul Malignaggi, that's who we want, a unification fight that will be the biggest in the division," he said.

(9-7-07)

Brian Doogan

Daniel Ponce De Leon KO 1 Rey Bautista

Sacramento, California: Mexican titlist Ponce De Leon has a reputation as one of boxing's hardest punchers, pound-for-pound. Previously unbeaten Filipino Bautista has a reputation for being easy to hit. You do the math.

Making his fifth defense of the WBO 122-pound title, southpaw Ponce De Leon, 121, wasted little time finding the chin of challenger Bautista, 121, and needed only 2 minutes, 30 seconds to add another knockout to his record at Arco Arena. In Bautista's previous fight, an exciting decision win over Sergio Manuel Medina in a high-profile spot on the undercard of Floyd Mayweather vs. Oscar De La Hoya, he proved available to receive punches and vulnerable to being hurt. Quite simply, his management team made a major miscalculation throwing him in with the raw but powerful Mexican.

Ponce De Leon, 27, came out winging big lefts, and a minute into the fight, the 21-year-old Bautista was already holding on to avoid danger. He couldn't avoid it for long, however. A southpaw one-two by Ponce De Leon found the mark, and the straight left that served as the "two" was perfect, causing Bautista, 23-1 (17), to wobble and drop. He got up quickly, but stumbled about before steadying himself. Ref Jon Schorle (USA) wiped his gloves and allowed him to fight on. But Ponce De Leon, 32-1 (29) jumped right on the Filipino, wobbled him with a combination, and dropped him again with another left hand, prompting Schorle to stop the rout without a count.

Having hardly broken a sweat, Ponce De Leon elected to return to action just seven weeks later, signing to fight Reynaldo Lopez on September 28.

Television: **HBO**

Promoter: **Golden Boy Promotions**

(8-11-07)

Gerry Penalosa KO 7 Jhonny Gonzalez

Sacramento, California: In the co-feature to Ponce De Leon's blowout of Bautista, the man many felt got the better of Ponce De Leon in his previous fight only to lose a disputed

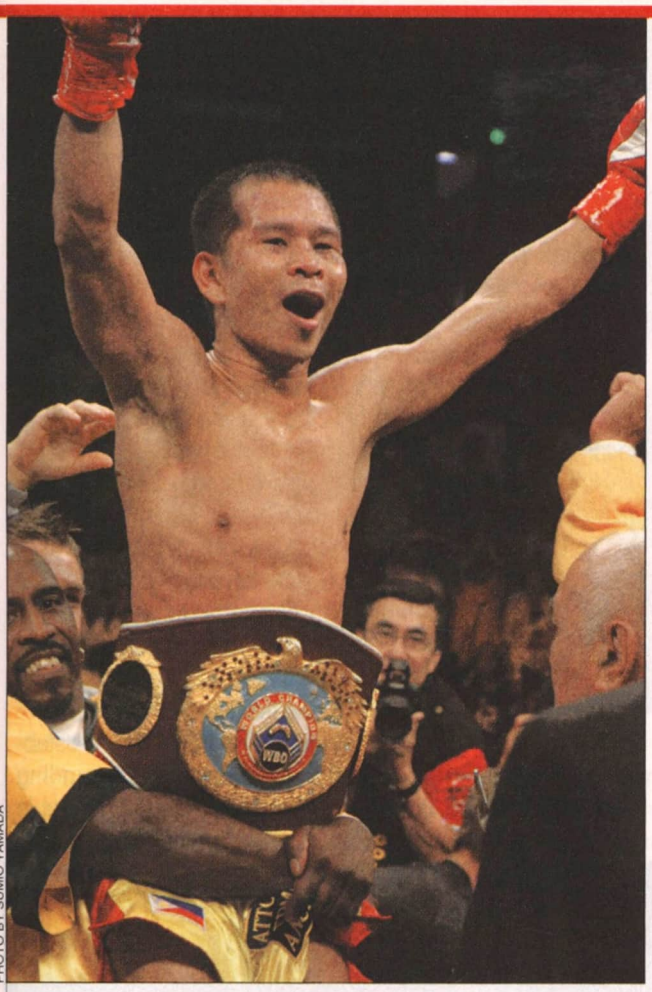

PHOTO BY SUMIO YAMADA

Penalosa celebrates surprise victory over Gonzalez

decision, Penalosa, took this one out of the judges' hands and scored his biggest win in a decade. The Filipino veteran was trailing through six rounds, but he landed a perfect liver shot in the seventh that paralyzed Gonzalez, earning the 35-year-old Penalosa the WBO bantamweight strap a full nine years after he lost his previous alphabet belt, the WBC super fly title.

Mexican Gonzalez claimed extreme difficulty making weight, although he came in two pounds under the class limit at 116. If he had weakened himself, he didn't show it much prior to the stoppage. Gonzalez circled defensively and hardly threw any punches in handing the opening round to Penalosa, 117, but after that, he got busy and took control. Gonzalez, 25, found his distance and started letting his punches go in the second, and began the third outfighting the southpaw Penalosa while circling and backing up. Penalosa scored with a nice counter left, but Gonzalez responded with a right to the pit of the stomach and continued doing effective bodywork for the rest of the round.

The fourth was another good round for Gonzalez, and he punctuated an exciting exchange just prior to the bell with a flush left hand. The fifth was closer, but it ended the same way, with an exciting exchange that the Mexican got the better of. Gonzalez, 34-6 (29), calmly and patiently picked up another point in the sixth, doing more good bodywork and scoring with a crisp right uppercut to the chin.

But for all of Gonzalez' fine bodypunching, it only took one bodypunch from his opponent to undo everything. A sudden, modest-looking left hand late in the seventh round found the perfect spot on Gonzalez' side, and he dropped to his knees on a delayed reaction. He remained crouched on the canvas throughout the count of American referee Pat Russell, who reached 10 at the 2:45 mark of the round.

Through six, judge C.J. Ross (USA) had Gonzalez ahead 59-55, Steve Morrow (USA) had him up 58-56, and Ralph McKnight (USA) surprisingly had it even, 57-57.

With the upset win, Penalosa, 52-6-2 (33), appears to have positioned himself for a rematch with Ponce De Leon, which is being discussed for early-'08.

Television: **HBO**
Promoter: **Golden Boy Promotions**
(8-11-07)

Chris John KO 9 Zaiki Takemoto

Tokyo, Japan: Unbeaten WBA feather titlist John, 125¾, Indonesia, impressively kept the belt as he dropped Japanese challenger Takemoto, 126, in the sixth and eighth before the challenger retired after the ninth round at Kobe Fashion Mart. It was John's eighth defense since he acquired the vacant title by outscoring Oscar Leon in 2003.

John, a slick-punching speedster, proved too fast and smart for the game but limited challenger. Takemoto got off to a good start and won the opening session, but it was the last round he controlled, as the Indonesian started his engine in the second round and began battering the taller challenger with precision.

The third saw John, 27, twice rock Takemoto, 28, with solid left-right combinations. In the fourth, John caught the challenger with accurate one-two combos, and Takemoto sustained a gash over the left eyebrow caused by a butt, which became a nuisance for him from then on.

In clear command, John, encouraged by his Australian manager Craig Christian, connected with quick combinations to floor Takemoto, 21-7-1 (12), in the sixth. "The Dragon" went all out for the finish, but the challenger fought back hard to last through the crisis. The seventh was another one-sided round for John, who threw sharper punches from all angles. In the eighth, John, 40-0-1 (20), again sent the challenger to the deck with fast combinations to the face. The end of this affair seemed a matter of time.

The ninth was dominated by the Indonesian, who opened another laceration on his opponent's left eye. Keitoku Senrima, Takemoto's manager, made a wise decision to have him quit after the ninth session, as his boy had no more energy left to retaliate and turn the tables. Referee Steve Smoger (USA) raised John's arm, and his victory was well received by the Indonesians who made the trip as well as the Japanese audience, who appreciated John's superiority in speed and skills.

Promoter: **Senrima Kobe Promotions**
(8-19-07)
Joe Koizumi

Yutaka Niida W 12 Eriberto Gejon

Tokyo, Japan: WBA minimumweight titlist Niida, 104¾, Japan, tallied his sixth successful defense thanks to a constant flow of jolting left hooks that connected on the face of tall Filipino challenger Gejon, 105. Niida displayed both aggressiveness and cleverness and completely controlled all but the first couple of rounds of the fight to win convincingly on the cards. Jean-Louis Legland (France) and Giuseppe Quartarone (Italy) both saw it 117-112, and Chalerm Prayadsab (Thailand) had it 117-111, all for the 28-year-old Niida. This was a rematch of a fight two years earlier that ended in the 10th round because of a cut and saw Niida awarded a split technical decision.

The lanky, 5'6" Gejon, 30, got off to a decent start by making good use of his superior reach, throwing sharp jabs and left-right combinations to the cautious Niida in the first round. But by the third round, the 5'2" Niida had solved the challenger's strategy and began to unleash looping left hooks that found the mark. Niida landed more solid left hooks and right crosses to dominate the fourth, while Gejon became a stationary target, and couldn't land his own punches against his elusive foe.

The sixth saw Niida sustain a gash on the forehead, streaming blood down in between his eyes. Gejon also began to bleed from a laceration over the left eyebrow in the sixth. Both of them fortunately stopped bleeding in later rounds, preventing the possibility of another technical decision.

The eighth round was close, with Gejon throwing busy combinations, though missing the target, as Niida looked content to avert punches without throwing many of his own. The ninth was won by Niida, who landed solid overhand rights to the fading upright stylist.

Niida was in command in the 11th, as he threw a barrage of punches that sent Gejon staggering to the ropes in the closing seconds. In the final stanza, Niida stepped up his attack in an effort to finish the affair, but couldn't prevent Gejon from hearing the final bell.

Gejon, 23-2-1 (14), fought well, but Niida turned in a much better performance than he had in their first meeting. This was one of the best showings of Niida's career, as he cleverly offset his opponent's height advantage by using his brain and speed to frustrate the challenger.

The jubilant Niida, 22-1-3 (8), called for a unification bout with the WBC titlist Eagle Kyowa (also known as Eagle Den Janlaphan), a Japan-based Thailander, in a fight that would be more meaningful than any other that can be made in the division.

Promoters: **Teiken Promotions, Yokohama Hikari Promotions**

(9-1-07)

Joe Koizumi

Zab Judah W 10 Edwin Vazquez

Biloxi, Mississippi: Three months after getting stopped by Miguel Cotto in one of the year's best fights, former welterweight champion Judah returned with a dominant but unspectacular performance against the veteran Vazquez at the Hard Rock Casino.

Judah, 148¾, gave himself major advantages by utilizing his superior hand speed and defensive head movement. After a slow opening round that saw the taller Vazquez, 148¾, keep his opponent at bay with his jab, the southpaw Judah began working his way inside effectively in the second. He had the 35-year-old Puerto Rican hurt in the final seconds of the third with a left hook to the body.

Hard bodyshots by Judah, 35-5 (25) with 2 no-contests, midway through the fourth set up a big left hook upstairs that again stunned Vazquez, 22-11-2 (8), whose nose was leaking blood at the bell. But a cut above Judah's left eye in the fifth, caused by an accidental clash of heads, temporarily took Judah out of his game. He stopped going to the body and became a bit more stationary, allowing Vazquez to land enough jabs and right hands to take the fifth and sixth rounds.

Judah rallied down the stretch, though, as he re-established his quick jab and slick defense while pounding Vazquez' ribs. The Brooklyn native went for the knockout in

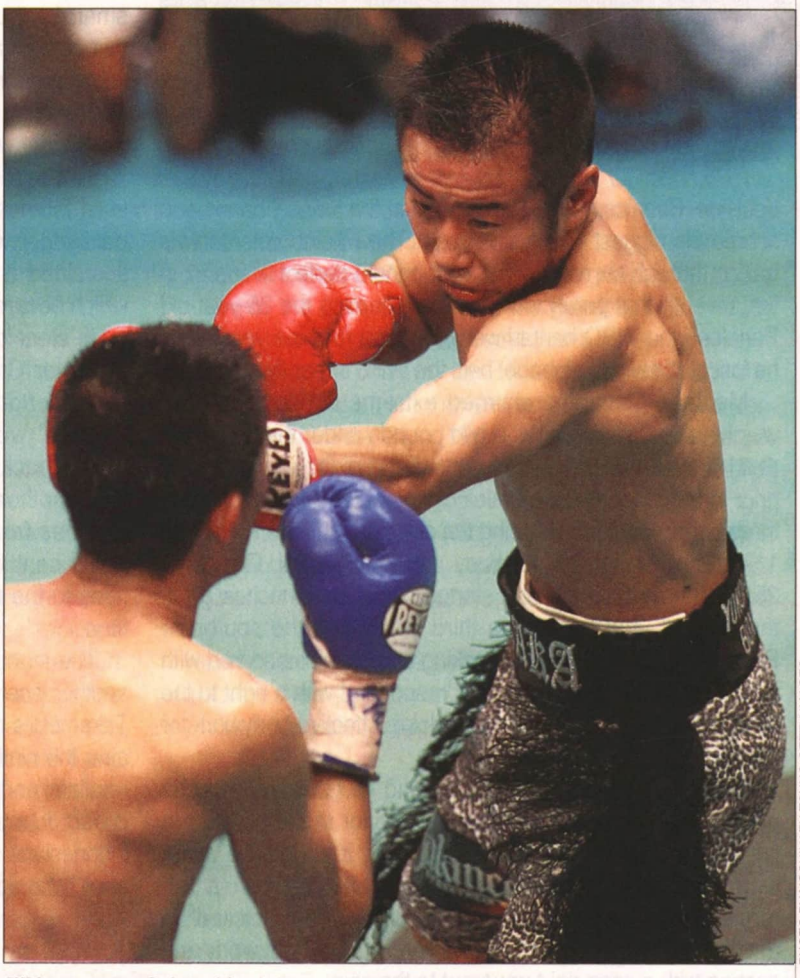

PHOTO BY YOSHIKAZU TSUNO/GETTY IMAGES

Niida measures Gejon with a left

PHOTO BY SCOTT FOSTER

Judah crashes a left off Vazquez' head

the eighth, when he did a throat-slash gesture after driving Vazquez into a corner. Judah stood flat-footed, daring his opponent to lead with something he could counter, before catching Vazquez with a pretty right uppercut 40 seconds before the bell. It was Judah's best punch of the night, though the game Vazquez survived.

Judah took few chances in the final two rounds as he cruised along behind his jab. Vazquez, a knockout victim of Acelino Freitas (1997), Wilfredo Negron (2000), and Ricardo Torres (2005), never backed down. But he lacked the speed or power to do much against Judah, who carried the fight by a wide margin on all three cards. David Taranto (USA) had it 97-93, Larry Ingle (USA) scored it 98-93, and Raymond White (USA) saw it a shutout at 100-90. THE RING scored it 97-93 for Judah. The referee was Bill Clancy (USA).

It was Judah's first win since May of 2005, when he stopped Cosme Rivera in a welterweight title defense. He'd gone 0-3 with a no-contest before beating Vazquez.

The 29-year-old remains an attractive opponent and could be headed toward an elimination fight next year with Richard Gutierrez for the right to face IBF beltholder Kermit Cintron.

Television: **ESPN2**
Promoter: **Prize Fight Promotions**
(9-7-07)

Lamont Peterson KO 6 Frankie Santos

Biloxi, Mississippi: Of the two Peterson brothers, lightweight contender Anthony is supposed to be the bigger puncher. But older brother Lamont is starting to put some knockouts on his record.

The rising junior welterweight Peterson, 140, beat the overmatched Santos, 139½, into submission for his second straight kayo. Santos, who took the fight on short notice, landed little of significance against the quick, slick Peterson. After six rounds, he decided he'd had enough.

Peterson, 22-0 (10), drove Santos into the ropes in the first with a double left hook to the ribs, but mostly dominated from a distance with his jab while deflecting most of his opponent's shots with his arms and gloves. He got more aggressive in the second, when he began stalking Santos and slipping more punches.

Peterson came close to ending it late in the third with a counter left hook to the head that drove Santos, 15-4-3 (7), into the ropes. The 28-year-old Puerto Rican took a right hand to the face that snapped his head back during Peterson's follow-up, but he managed to survive.

The 23-year-old Peterson showboated a bit as he jabbed and moved with ease in the fourth. He engaged Santos at close range in the fifth and sixth, trading shots, most of which were to the body. At the end of the sixth, Peterson drove Santos into the ropes with a straight right to the jaw, which was apparently enough to convince Santos' corner to quit.

Television: **ESPN2**
Promoter: **Prize Fight Promotions**
(9-7-07)

Arthur Abraham KO 11 Khoren Gevor

Berlin, Germany: No matter how willing some fighters are, no matter how brave, sometimes the disparity in class is just too great, which is how it was when Gevor, 159¾, Hamburg, Germany, via Edmiazin, Armenia, challenged Abraham, 159¾, Berlin, Germany, via Yerevan, Armenia, for the IBF middleweight title at Max Schmeling Halle. Through 10 rounds, Gevor fought as well as he could, but the 11th-round knockout with which Abraham retained the belt for the fifth time merely confirmed his place in the natural order, well short of where his conqueror stands.

With his power and all-around aptitude for battle, Abraham is one of the world's best middleweights, but, being based in Germany, he is also largely overlooked in America.

"I would love to go to America sometime to show people there what I can do, but I'm happy boxing in Germany and the sport is very healthy here, so why would I leave?" he said after beating Gevor. "Many times I have said that I would fight Jermain Taylor (who was due to defend the world middleweight title against Kelly Pavlik on September 29), but we haven't heard anything from his promoter to suggest that the fight will ever be possible."

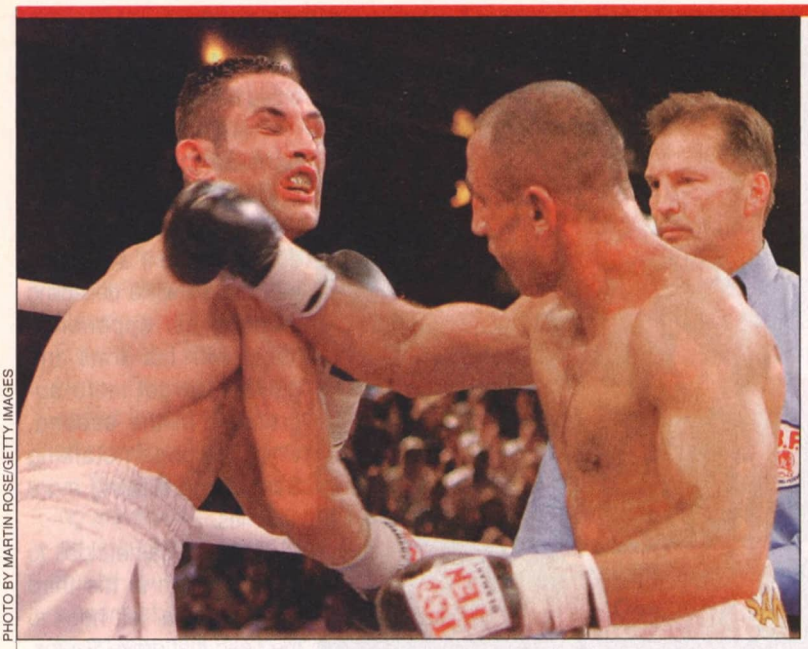

PHOTO BY MARTIN ROSE/GETTY IMAGES

Abraham stuns Gevor with a right

Gevor, 27-3 (15), enjoyed a successful amateur career, winning 72 out of 75 bouts and claiming six Armenian national titles. His only two defeats as a pro had been when challenging Lukas Konecny for something called the German International light middleweight title in back-to-back encounters in 2002, the first of which he lost on points before being stopped in eight rounds in the rematch. But no one he had ever previously faced was in Abraham's class, and the difference was apparent from early on. Gevor did start well and even outworked the titleholder slightly, but by the third round, Abraham's power was beginning to have an impact and he was able to assert himself as and when he so chose.

Abraham, 24-0 (19), fell to the floor in the fourth, albeit just a slip, but Gevor was encouraged to throw more punches. His problem was that very few of them got through Abraham's defenses, and even when they did, such as in the sixth when he caught his opponent with a right to the jaw and several followup punches, the effect on Abraham was negligible. Over the next two rounds, Abraham continued to wear down the challenger, who was barely able to survive round 10. Then in the 11th, Abraham got Gevor in trouble again with a series of hooks and finally finished the job with a right uppercut to the jaw that left Gevor on his knees. American referee Pete Podgorski counted him out at 2:41 of the round.

"I believe I am the best middleweight boxer in the world and, hopefully, I will get to prove this against the other titleholders," said Abraham. A unification fight with Germany's Felix Sturm, who holds the WBA middleweight belt, would be a natural, but first Germany's most powerful promoters, Peter Kohl and Wilfried Sauerland, would need to do business, and this might not be easy.

Promoter: **Wilfried Sauerland**
(8-18-07)
Brian Doogan

Miguel Huerta W 12
Efren Hinojosa

Houston, Texas: It's not often that a loser of a televised bout is brought back to top the bill in his very next fight. But that's what happened to Huerta, who was being compensated for being on the wrong end of a highly controversial decision to Almazbek "Kid Diamond" Raiymkulov in June. Huerta, 135, Mexico City, took advantage of the opportunity, winning a hard-fought decision over Hinojosa at Houston Grand Plaza.

Had it not been for some strange refereeing by Laurence Cole, Huerta, 25-8 (17), might very well have scored a sensational kayo in the second round. Hinojosa, 135, Lakeside, California, went down after being tagged with a right and a trio of left hooks. He beat the count, but was soon floored with another left hook. It looked momentarily as if Cole was waving the fight over, but it turned out he was signaling that it wasn't a knockdown. Apparently, he did not see the punch that decked Hinojosa, and he also didn't see the flush right to the head that Hinojosa landed well after the round-ending bell sounded, because no warning was issued.

The 35-year-old Hinojosa, 29-4-1 (17), seemed fully recovered by the start of the third and bloodied Huerta's nose. But Huerta connected with a series of sharp left hooks and a few rights to clearly win the round. Again, Hinojosa landed a hard right after the bell, and again there was no action from Cole.

The pace slowed in the fourth, which suited Hinojosa, but the cut he suffered over the right eye in the fifth certainly didn't. The doctor checked the cut between rounds and allowed the fight to continue.

The sixth was close; Hinojosa kept his hands moving, peppering his advancing adversary with clean but light punches, while Huerta, 29, just kept boring in behind looping shots. Late in the round, Cole called a timeout for the doctor to look at the cut again.

There was another medical timeout in the seventh, a round that Huerta took with his aggression and work rate. But in the eighth, Hinojosa rattled Huerta for the first time with a cluster of combinations.

Hinojosa was enjoying another decent round in the ninth, when Huerta rallied and sent his foe careening into the ropes with a left hook late in the session. But the effort seemed to tire Huerta, and Hinojosa gained some ground by staying busier in the 10th and 11th rounds.

Still bleeding from the gash over his right eye, Hinojosa kept trying right up until the final bell, but Huerta's harder punches were enough to win the final round and the fight. Scores of 120-106 (Chris Tellez) and 119-108 (Gale Van Hoy) seemed overly generous, especially compared to the 115-112 score of Ray Hawkins. THE RING also had Huerta winning, 117-111.

Television: **Versus**
Promoter: **Top Rank**
(8-30-07)

Victor Ortiz KO 10 Emmanuel Clottey

Houston, Texas: Almost 10 rounds of frustration for Ortiz, the crowd at the Houston Grand Plaza, and Versus' television audience came to an end in the 10th and final round when Ortiz stopped Clottey with just one second remaining in the fight.

The 33-year-old Clottey, 145, Bronx, New York, was reluctant to engage throughout most of the fight, and even though he nearly lasted the distance, his legs and balance looked shaky from the start. He backed away, pawed with his punches, and seldom went on the offensive.

The 20-year-old Ortiz, 142, Oxnard, California, did his best to make a fight of it, but didn't really land a serious punch until the sixth when he buckled Clottey's knees with a string of lefts out of his southpaw stance. The older brother of world-rated welterweight Joshua Clottey was rocked again in the seventh, but managed to muster enough punches to prevent Ortiz from finishing the job.

Refereeing Texas-style came into play in the eighth when Ronnie Ralston penalized Clottey two points for debatable rule violations. Not that it mattered much—the native of Ghana was so far behind he'd need a knockout to win.

Clottey, 24-8 (14), actually opened up a bit in the 10th, but probably wished he hadn't. Both men fired right hands at the same time, but it was Ortiz, 19-1-1 (14), who connected with power, sending Clottey to the canvas. He beat the count, only to be floored again with a left hook, prompting Ralston to stop the fight at the 2:59 mark.

Promoter: **Top Rank**
(8-30-07)

Fulgencio Zuniga KO 9
Victor Oganov

Tacoma, Washington: Oganov stood in the ring posing like Superman, hands on hips, staring straight over the crowd with his massive muscles fully flexed. For a full minute he stood as such while the crowd marveled at his body, marveled at his pose. He looked like a miniature Vitali Klitschko, and everyone knew he was here to destroy his veteran "opponent" and match the one-time record of Klitschko at 27-0 (27).

But the gentleman from South America had decided he was not there to play second fiddle to Oganov, 167, Syktyvkar, Russia, and he proved it with his kryptonite-filled fists as Zuniga, 167, Padilla, Colombia, exposed the one-dimensional Russian by pounding "The Destroyer" into submission at 1:25 of the ninth round before a packed house at the Emerald Queen Casino.

Zuniga, 20-2-1 (17), befuddled the courageous Oganov, 26-1 (26), from the very start, cracking him with jabs, hooks, and uppercuts from the first round on. There was a brief moment in the opening round when Oganov seemed to have things going his way, when the top of his left wrist cuffed Zuniga and pushed him into the ropes. Referee Jeff Macaluso (USA) called it a knockdown and the Colombian stared at him in disbelief as he tolled the eight-count. But Zuniga quickly got back to hitting the Russian, dancing to his left, and moving in and out, showing excellent defense and world-class boxing skills.

Oganov, who had never faced a ranked contender, found himself handcuffed by the nimble footwork and quick combinations of the man who knocked down Kelly Pavlik in one of only two defeats on the Colombian's record.

In the fourth round, the two fighters butted heads and blood began seeping from a cut under Oganov's right eye. In the eighth round, Oganov staged a rally that found the two pugilists exchanging vicious punches in the center of the ring. Bright red gore mixed with sweat and water splattered onto the ringside apron as fans erupted in a frenzy of excitement.

The end came in the ninth, as Zuniga caught the Russian with a short left hook that sent him crumbling to the canvas where he briefly lay unmoving, his eyes flickering up at the ceiling. He gradually rolled onto his side and arose, tottering and dizzy as Macaluso waved him back into the fight.

Zuniga swarmed over him with lefts and rights, and Oganov backed into the ropes. He bent over like he was searching for something on the ground, his head almost touching the canvas as the Colombian rained a ceaseless barrage of leather upon him. Macaluso finally stepped in and halted the massacre as Zuniga ran around the ring in jubilation.

Afterward, Zuniga proclaimed, "I just took it round by round and followed the instructions of my corner." When asked for a quote, Oganov responded by screaming profanities. Showtime boxing analyst Steve Farhood summed it up nicely when he said, "Welcome to the real world, Victor Oganov."

Promoters: **Gary Shaw Productions, Brian Halquist Productions**
Television: **Showtime**
(9-2-07)

Oliver W. Tuthill Jr.

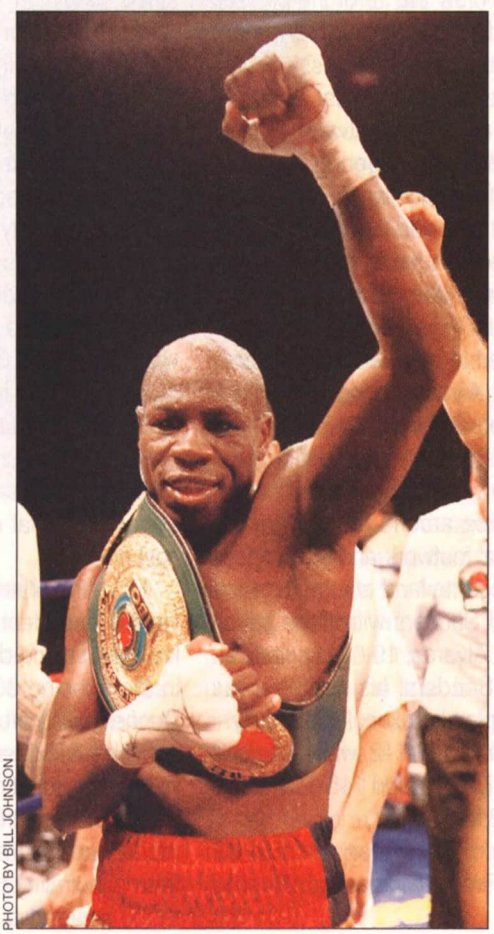

PHOTO BY BILL JOHNSON

Zuniga celebrates victory over Oganov

Shamone Alvarez W 12 Germaine Sanders

Atlantic City, N.J.: For rising welterweight prospect Alvarez, who has gained a solid following in his hometown of Atlantic City, the bouts are getting a little tougher; this was the first time in his career that he has gone two consecutive fights without scoring a knockout. But "The Truth" showed he could adapt, as he boxed circles around the game Sanders when necessary to garner a unanimous decision in his first defense of the regional NABO welterweight belt.

The 30-year-old Alvarez, 147, established his pattern early in the bout at Boardwalk Hall, choosing to double jab and dart in with two- and three-punch flurries. In the first quarter of the bout, those flurries appeared to be open-gloved slaps, but they racked up the points since the 37-year-old Sanders, 144¾, Chicago, Illinois, waded in with much less activity. Alvarez' stick-and-move tactics and superior hand speed began frustrating Sanders to the point that he leaned his forearm on the local fighter's throat. Alvarez responded in similar fashion, but Sanders re-retaliated with a lacing of Alvarez' face that drew the ire of the partisan crowd and a warning from referee David Franciosi (USA).

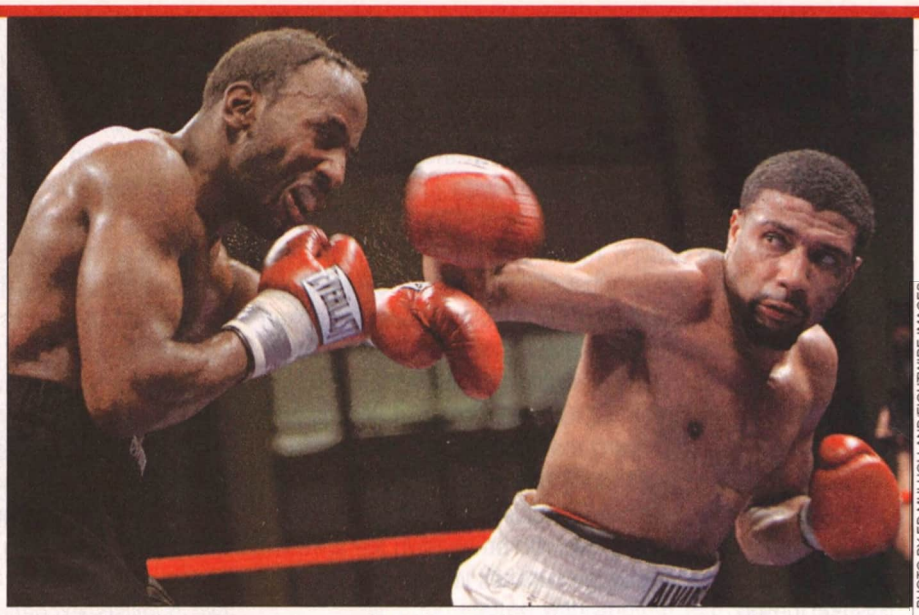

PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Alvarez fires a right at Sanders

Sanders stepped up his aggression in round six, driving Alvarez to the ropes with a series of punches that appeared to bother the New Jersey man. But southpaw Alvarez did well to spin off the twine as both fighters engaged in a furious exchange. In the seventh, Sanders once again forearmed Alvarez in the face and neck, but received not even a warning as the Alvarez followers became more enraged. The Truth went back to double and triple jabs, exhibiting superior ring generalship through the eighth.

Down the stretch, Sanders tried to rally, wobbling Alvarez with a left early in the ninth, but Alvarez responded with a counter right that stopped Sanders in his tracks. Both combatants went toe-to-toe for the rest of the round, bringing the patrons to their feet in by far the best round of the contest. Sanders, 27-4 (17), chased his foe around the ring for the remainder of the bout, but Alvarez' footwork and elusiveness were just too good for the challenger to land any more blows of significance. Alvarez frustrated Sanders with three-punch bursts before darting away. Once Alvarez, 19-0 (11), realized he was not going to knock out Sanders, his strategy was about hitting without getting hit, a plan he executed faithfully.

Judge John Poturaj (USA) scored 117-112, while Shafeeq Rashada (USA) and George Hill (USA) tallied 115-113, all for Alvarez. THE RING scored 116-112 for Alvarez

Television: **ESPN2**
Promoter: **Warriors Boxing**
(8-31-07)
Mike Greenhill

Kiko Martinez KO 1 Bernard Dunne

Dublin, Ireland: For almost six years, Dunne, 121, Dublin, Ireland, had accumulated an unbeaten record and a growing reputation that appeared destined to secure for him a title shot whenever his manager and promoter, Brian Peters, chose his moment. But the vulnerability that the 27-year-old Irishman had betrayed two years ago against Yuri Voronin, an unheralded Ukrainian, was exploited ruthlessly by Martinez, 121, Alicante, Spain, who ripped the European super bantamweight title from Dunne's hands at The Point and—for now, at least—shattered his world title dreams.

The unbeaten 21-year-old Spaniard, nicknamed "La Sensacion," certainly caused one with some well-placed and powerful punches that catapulted him into the limelight and yielded a princely sum from bookmakers for both himself and his team. With absolute faith, they had placed various bets on a first-round victory, at odds of up to 66-1, and their return on these bets alone was almost $20,000. The deficit for Dunne was far greater, for he will have to build himself up again. He made his name initially under the tutelage of Freddie Roach while living in Santa Monica, California, and some observers criticized his return to Ireland. But he felt more at home, and the intelligent manner in which Peters had marketed his fighter validated that decision, though both may be counting the cost now.

From the opening bell, Martinez, 17-0 (14), came out stalking his opponent and, after taking a left hook to the body, knocked Dunne down with a left hook-right hand combination in the opening 30 seconds. A furious followup assault, with Dunne reeling around the ring, culminated in a right hand that sent the Dubliner crashing to the canvas. Dunne beat the mandatory count of British referee Terry O'Connor, but he was clearly in deep trouble. When Martinez came in to finish the job, Dunne was helpless, failing to prevent the damaging blows from penetrating his guard. Finally, two devastating left hooks to the jaw and a right hand left him defenseless against the ropes, and O'Connor moved in to wave the bout over at 1:26.

"I'm disgusted with myself," reflected Dunne, 24-1 (14). "I just got caught cold. We knew by Kiko's record that he's a puncher, but I threw a combination and just did not see the [first] punch coming. I make no excuses whatsoever. I was in fantastic shape. I trained hard. Everything went perfectly. I feel I let myself down, my team down. I think I let the people down."

To pick himself back up will be his task now, but coming back from such a setback will be fraught with difficulty. Martinez, on the other hand, could be an emerging force in the 122-pound division, especially given the power and self-confidence he showed on this night.

Promoters: **Brian Peters Promotions, Dennis Hobson**

(8-25-07)

Brian Doogan

PHOTO BY CHRIS ROYLE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Martinez drops Dunne

Ricardo Torres KO II Kendall Holt

Barranquilla, Colombia: Paterson, New Jersey, junior welterweight contender Holt knew he was taking two major risks in agreeing to this bout against WBO beltholder Torres: He was going to put his own suspect chin (Holt's lone loss came by first-round kayo in 2004) on the line against a fearsome puncher (27 of Torres' 31 wins coming in were by knockout); and he was facing an extra set of obstacles trying to unseat a Colombian in Colombia. Had this bout taken place in Chicago on the David Diaz-Erik Morales undercard, as was the plan at one time, perhaps the outcome would have been different. But the reality was that the combination of risks was too much for Holt to overcome, and he suffered a controversial 11th-round TKO loss at Salon Jumbo del Country Club.

The clash of styles between stick-and-move boxer-puncher Holt, 139½, and raw slugger Torres, 139¾, made for quite a few dull rounds. Holt edged the opener with a decent one-two combo, and the second round epitomized the worst potential of the style match: Holt spent almost the whole round circling and playing keep-away, while Torres pivoted in circles, bouncing on his toes while throwing hardly any punches. The only interesting moment of the round came when Holt landed what looked like a good, clean left to the body, and referee Geno Rodriguez (USA) warned him for a low blow.

Holt, 26, took the third with a nice right hand to the head, but Torres, 27, best known previously for a thrilling back-and-forth loss to Miguel Cotto in '05, got going in round four, landing a counter left hook that wobbled Holt, causing him to spend almost the entire round on his bike. "Rated R" Holt kept running throughout the fifth, and the sixth was following a similar pattern until Holt suckered Torres into a sizzling left-right combination off the ropes with about 20 seconds to go in the round, dropping Torres to the canvas for a brief count.

The action slowed in rounds seven through nine, leading to some booing from the crowd, until a pair of jolting right hands from Holt late in the ninth woke everyone up. The 10th featured more action, with Holt landing most of the big punches. Heading into round 11, Holt was up by four points on THE RING's card, though the official judges weren't in total agreement; Jose Roberto Torres (Puerto Rico) had Holt up 98-91, but Stuart Winston (USA) had him ahead just 95-94, and Manuel Rodriguez (Colombia) inexcusably had Torres in front 95-94.

The questionable judging became irrelevant in round 11, however, when questionable refereeing took center stage. Early in the round, a punch from Holt knocked Torres halfway through the ropes, but ref Rodriguez didn't call it a knockdown. Not long after, Torres hurt Holt with a right hand in the corner, causing the American to hold on. As he tried to run and hold, Holt found himself slipping a bit on the wet canvas (partially due to beverages hurled into the ring earlier by fans). With about a minute remaining in the round, Torres landed a huge left hand, putting Holt on the floor, badly hurt. He beat Rodriguez' count and Torres, 32-1 (28), pounced, leading to a highly debatable stoppage by the ref just as Holt threw a left hand in return.

An incensed Holt, 22-2 (12), alleging that at one point a Torres cornerman grabbed him by the leg during the final round, made an official protest a few days later, pushing for an immediate rematch in the United States.

Promoter: **Billy Chams**

(9-1-07) ■

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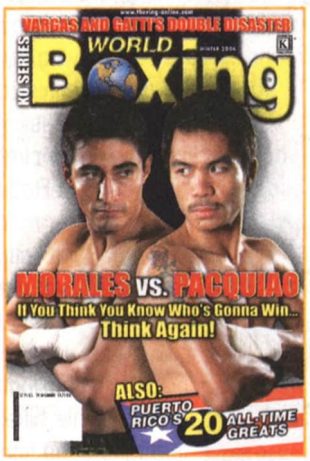

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DON'T MISS

RING UPDATE WITH WILLIAM DETTLOFF

EVERY MONDAY ... EXCLUSIVELY ON: thering-online.com

Always insightful and often provocative, William Dettloff, *The Ring*'s senior writer, is the thinking-fans' columnist, a writer who never settles for the same old stale commentary you've already read a dozen times. For example, here's Dettloff's take on a handful of hot topics:

The dangers of boxing: "Long after you and I and everyone we know are long gone, men will still be fighting one another with their fists, and sometimes bad things will happen as a result. You may feel guilty about that fact if you wish. I will not."

Nicolay Valuev: "He's hairier than Robin Williams and facially looks an awful lot like Lurch from *The Addams Family*. In today's heavyweight division, that can get you a good long way."

The lack of a dominant heavyweight: "When a heavyweight champ is dominant, the only fun comes in wondering when someone will cut him down to size and how. We rush a guy to the top of the mountain just for the pleasure of watching him get knocked off."

Dettloff on thering-online.com ... The perfect way to answer the week's opening bell!

4748/05.06

(Continued from Page 28)

asked how those scraps turned out, but Lopez claims he never backed down from anyone.

"We lived in a very tough neighborhood when I was growing up," he said. "If you didn't defend yourself or you didn't hit someone, they were going to run over you. You had to stand your ground if you were going to survive in that environment. It led me to this boxing career."

Lopez said he first tried the sport when he was 10, after someone told him he should be fighting in a gym rather than in the streets. He soon began training in Caugas under Orlando Piñero, who guided the fighter to a 126-24 amateur mark. Lopez won five straight Puerto Rican titles from 2000 to '04, picked up the bronze at the Central American Games in 2002, and was the island's 119-pound representative at the 2004 Olympic Games.

Lopez lost in the first round of the Olympics, which gives him something else in common with Gomez. The two are compared so frequently that it's almost unfair to both, but Lopez doesn't mind. "It doesn't bother me at all," he said. "I feel very proud when someone says I'm remotely close to Wilfredo Gomez, who to me is the greatest fighter in Puerto Rican history. When people say I remind them of him, I'm very humbled by it. That's why I work very hard to accomplish some of the things he accomplished."

With Piñero as his manager and Alexander Caraballo as his trainer, Lopez began his career with nine straight knockouts. In his fifth fight, Lopez was floored early by North Carolina's Charles Jones, but came back to drop Jones three times before the round ended for the TKO. Lopez, who said he was caught off-balance, claimed it's the only time he's ever been knocked down.

Two fights later, he beat Colombia's Luis Bolano, who was 41-4 at the time, when Bolano quit after two rounds due to a hand injury. Lopez also appeared twice on Miguel Cotto undercards. He then had a highlight-reel one-punch knockout of Jose Luis Caro in the third round of their fight on the Manny Pacquiao-Erik Morales II card in Las Vegas.

With expectations building, Lopez was taken the eight-round distance in his 10th fight by Gilberto Bolanos on the Cotto-Gianluca Branco undercard in Bayamon. Though he won via near shutout, Lopez was booed by the Puerto Rican fans.

"I was very surprised that all of these people thought I was a great fighter before the fight, then those same people were booing me," Lopez said. "That kind of shocked me, the response. But I'm glad that happened. It just motivated me more to give the fans what they want."

He's stopped eight of his nine opponents since, including Jose Alonso (31-10-2 at the time), Giovanni Andrade (55-10), and, in his most recent outing, Hugo Dianzo (31-11-1). While Alonso went in three rounds

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Lopez shoots a right at experienced Mexican Hugo Dianzo en route to a 10th-round TKO victory. Lopez says it was his toughest fight and a good learning experience.

and Andrade in one, Dianzo proved to be much more difficult.

Lopez dominated, but the experienced Mexican made him work for the win, which came in the 10th when the fight was stopped due to a cut on Dianzo's scalp. It was a big step up for Lopez. In 2001, Dianzo scored a knockdown but wound up losing a close decision in a challenge of then-bantamweight titlist Paulie Ayala. Dianzo also fought for a 118-pound belt in 2003, losing a decision in Thailand to Veeraphol Sahaprom.

"Without a doubt it was my toughest fight," Lopez said. "I think every fight you learn something. This fight taught me how to go a lot of rounds. The guy was a difficult fighter with a difficult style. It was a good learning experience for me."

While the fight world is raving about Lopez' potential, Trampler is cautiously optimistic. Twelve of Lopez' 19 fights have ended in three rounds or less, including seven via first-round kayo. At times, such as in the Dianzo fight, Trampler feels that lack of rounds has showed.

As of the end of August, Top Rank had plans to bring Lopez back sometime during the fall, most likely in Puerto Rico. "We're just trying to build that foundation under him," Trampler said, "so he can be something when the time comes. There's no timetable. You just go by feel and you go by opportunity."

Trampler has been around the fight game long enough to know not to makes boasts or predictions about a fighter. It's tough to foresee what can happen to even the most talented of prospects in a sport where one bad night or even one punch can change everything.

But Trampler won't deny the potential that's there.

"Maybe someday," he said, "being the first Juan Manuel Lopez will be just as good as being the next Wilfredo Gomez." ■

Don Stewart covers boxing for the Reading (Pennsylvania) Eagle and is a regular contributor to THE RING.

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WBA Welterweight Title

Miquel Cotto

Main Event 12 Rounds

Shane Mosley

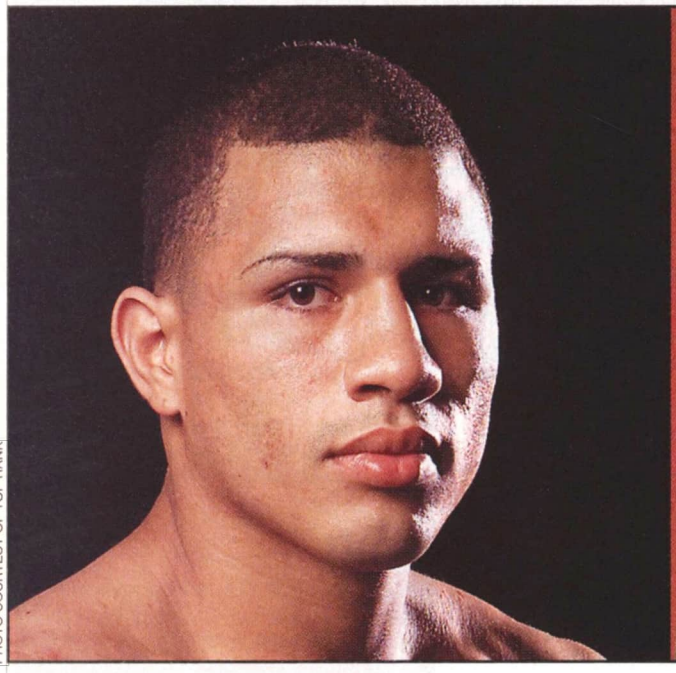


PHOTO COURTESY OF TOP RANK

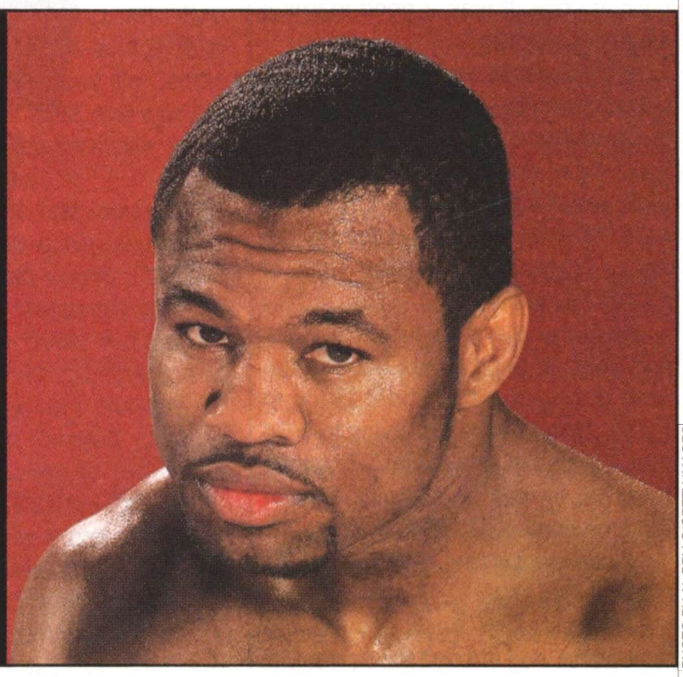


PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

We learned a lot about Miguel Cotto when he dismantled Zab Judah in 11 rounds in June. But we will learn even more when he meets Shane Mosley, November 10, in Madison Square Garden.

Cotto took a step up when he faced former welterweight champion Judah, but Mosley is on a higher level. Whereas Judah possesses blistering hand speed and good power, his staying power is dubious and psyche fragile.

Judah defiantly slugged with Cotto in a courageous effort, before finally succumbing. But Mosley has better physical attributes than Judah and much stronger resolve. Mosley won't wilt under the strain of Cotto's constant charges. He'll fight back.

That's what makes this fight so intriguing: two highly motivated and talented fighters who won't give an inch, testing each other's determination and skill.

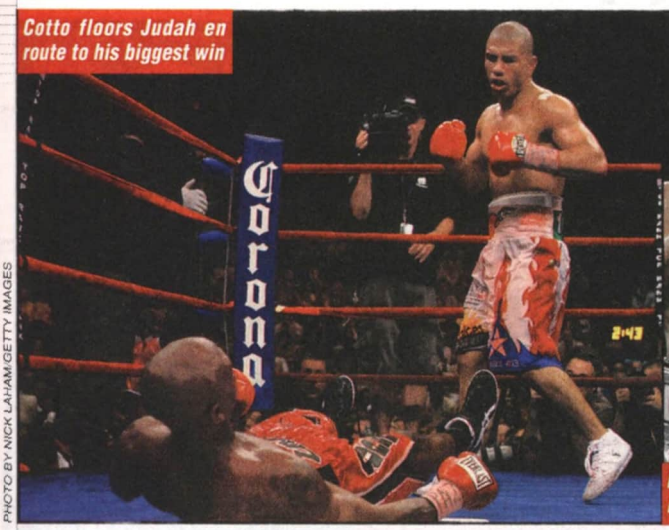
A victory over Mosley would be another giant step toward solidifying Cotto as Puerto Rico's most beloved prizefighter, now that Felix Trinidad is in the twilight of his Hall of Fame career. For Mosley, it's a chance to prove once again the doubters wrong. He stopped Fernando Vargas twice in 2006, but that came with the caveat that Vargas was past his best. Prior to the pair of wins over "El Feroz," Sugar Shane's last signature victory came in September 2003, when he beat Oscar De La Hoya a second time—and that decision was disputed.

Stylistically Mosley-Cotto is a Fight of the Year candidate, which means plenty of fun for the fans and an SRO crowd at the Garden.

Miguel Cotto

Shane Mosley

Record and World Rating



Cotto floors Judah en route to his biggest win

PHOTO BY NICK LAHAM/GETTY IMAGES

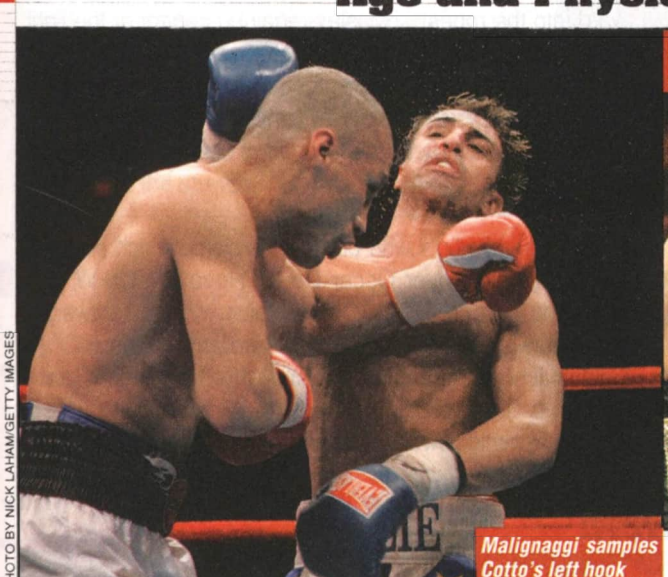
Mosley slams a left into Collazo's forehead

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Is 30-0 with 25 knockouts ... Turned pro in February 2001 after distinguished amateur career that included representing Puerto Rico at the 2000 Olympics and winning the Puerto Rican National Amateur championship four years in a row ... Had very successful run at 140 pounds before moving up to 147 ... Captured WBA welterweight title in June '06 and has successfully defended it three times ... Is ranked first at welterweight by THE RING.

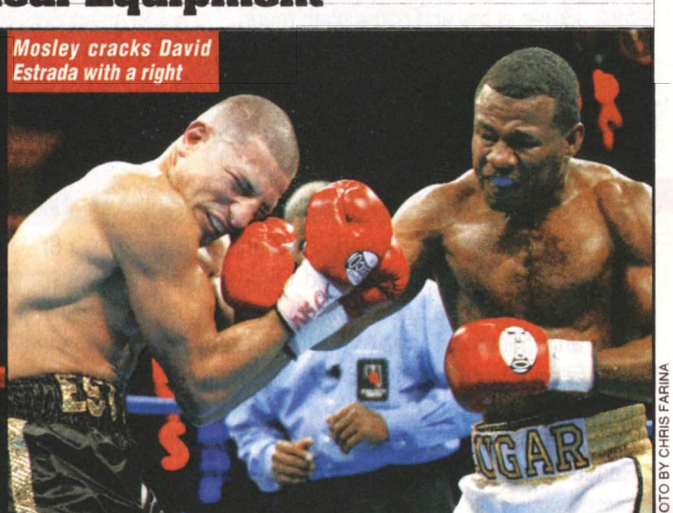
Is 44-4 with 37 knockouts and 1 no-contest ... Tallied 240-10 amateur career ... Alternate on 1992 Olympic team ... Turned pro in February '93 ... Annexed IBF lightweight title in August '97 ... Won WBC welterweight title in June '00 ... Lost WBC belt in January '02 following three successful defenses ... Won World junior middle title in September '03 ... Lost World junior middleweight title in March '04 ... Is rated third at welterweight by THE RING.

Age and Physical Equipment



Malignaggi samples Cotto's left hook

PHOTO BY NICK LAHAM/GETTY IMAGES



Mosley cracks David Estrada with a right

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

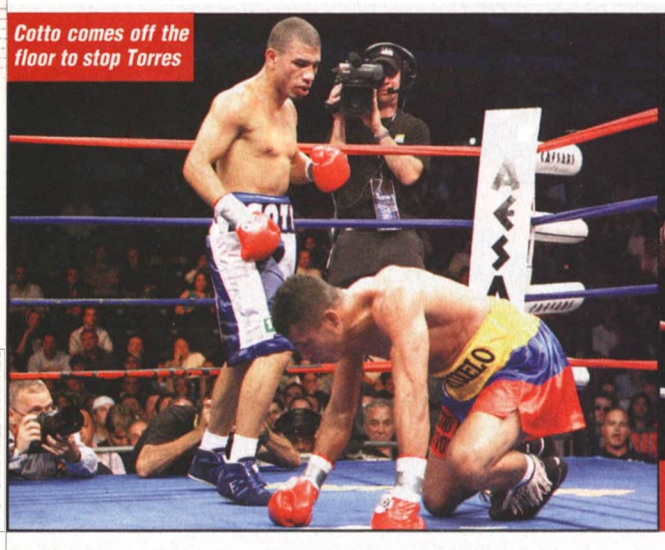
Is 27 years old ... Stands 5'8" with a 67-inch reach ... Always in excellent condition ... Has bruised in the past, but does not show great tendency to cut or swell ... Liabilities are lack of hand and foot speed and questionable chin.

Is 36 years old ... Stands 5'9" with a 72-inch reach ... Has hand speed advantage over practically all opponents ... Has been relatively injury free, except for periodic back spasms ... Seldom cuts ... Has fluctuated between 147 and 154 for the last two years, though always in shape to go 12 rounds ... Solid chin.

Miguel Cotto

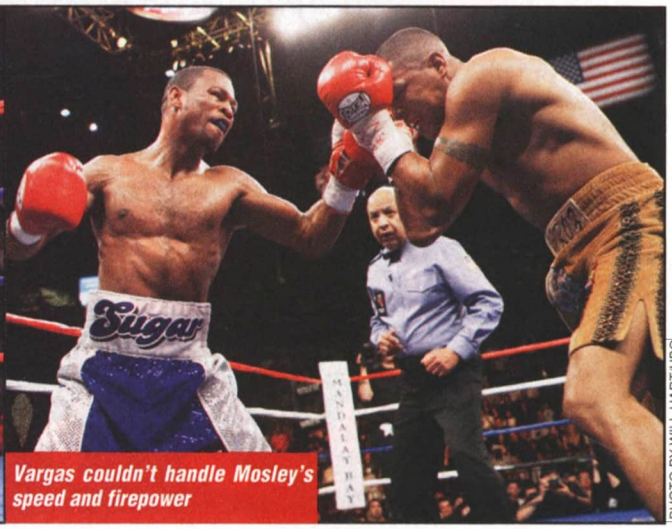
Shane Mosley

Best Weapons



Cotto comes off the floor to stop Torres

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO



Vargas couldn't handle Mosley's speed and firepower

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Heavy-handed with a good assortment of punches, but thunderous left hook to body is signature blow ... Calm demeanor is major asset; never panics when tagged with a good shot or dropped ... Excellent combination puncher ... Self-confidence a significant factor.

Explosive combination puncher ... Tremendous body-puncher ... Power in both hands, but straight right could be slightly harder than left hook, especially when thrown to the head ... Accurate jab ... Power has decreased since moving up from 135 pounds, but better at 147 than 154.

Previous Fight

Scored biggest victory of his career to date, stopping a plucky Judah in the 11th round before a sellout crowd at Madison Square Garden in June ... Was penalized a point in the third round for punching low ... Cotto's constant body attack began wearing Judah down in the eighth ... Judah took a knee at the end of the ninth round ... Scored a second knockdown in the 11th with a three-punch combination ... Referee Arthur Mercante Jr. stopped it at 0:49 of the round with Judah defenseless against the ropes.

Started well and finished even stronger against former WBA welterweight titleholder Luis Collazo in February, winning a unanimous decision ... Collazo couldn't hurt Mosley, though had one big round in the second when he ripped Mosley with straight left that sent him reeling backward into the ropes ... Mosley regained control of the fight in the third, returning four punches every time Collazo made contact ... Mosley cemented the victory by scoring fight's only knockdown in the 11th to win by tallies of 118-109 (twice) and 119-108.

Quality of Opposition

Has faced light hitters such as Gianluca Branco (KO 8), Paulie Malignaggi (W 12), and Oktay Urkal (KO 11) ... Survived slight scare against Judah and a bigger one against kayo artist Ricardo Torres (KO 7) ... Blitzed Carlos Quintana (KO 5) ... Fought hodgepodge of qualified boxers and punchers as rising contender, including Mohamed Abdulaev (KO 9), Demarcus Corley (KO 5), Kelson Pinto (KO 6), Randall Bailey (KO 6), and Carlos Maussa (KO 8).

Has fought who's who of three divisions, which included pair of victories over Oscar De La Hoya (W 12, W 12), Fernando Vargas (KO 10, KO 6), plus wins at lightweight over John-John Molina (KO 8), Jesse James Leija (KO 9), Golden Johnson (KO 7), Philip Holiday (12), and John Brown (KO 8) ... Suffered pair of defeats to Winky Wright (L 12, L 12) at junior middleweight and Vernon Forrest (L 12, L 12) at welterweight.

Defense

Displays solid defensive skills when in boxer mode, despite only average mobility ... When in slugger mode, over-commits to punches and leaves himself open for counters ... Slow hands leave him vulnerable to quicker fighters when both punch simultaneously ... Intelligently clinches when hurt.

Uses bouncy legs to rapidly move out of opponent's striking ability ... Good upper-body movement ... Busy offense has discouraged many foes from getting too brave ... Also knows how to create angles on the inside that allows him to punch without giving foe the same opportunity.

Miguel Cotto

Shane Mosley

Style

Cotto watches Bailey crumble

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Can adjust strategically based on opponent, as when he turned southpaw style against Judah ... Most often an aggressive, patient powerpuncher who stalks opponents and attacks the body ... Will use his shoulders and elbows for inside positioning where he can muscle fighters who can't match his strength ... Excellent finisher.

Uses savvy movement and rapid-fire combination punching ... Unrelenting finisher when he has foe in trouble ... Style worked perfectly until Forrest devised counter approach by jabbing and clinching ... Ability to adjust mid-fight ... Can unload with equal effectiveness up close or at long range ...Tends to be stronger than most foes down the stretch.

De La Hoya tastes Mosley's power

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

The Questions

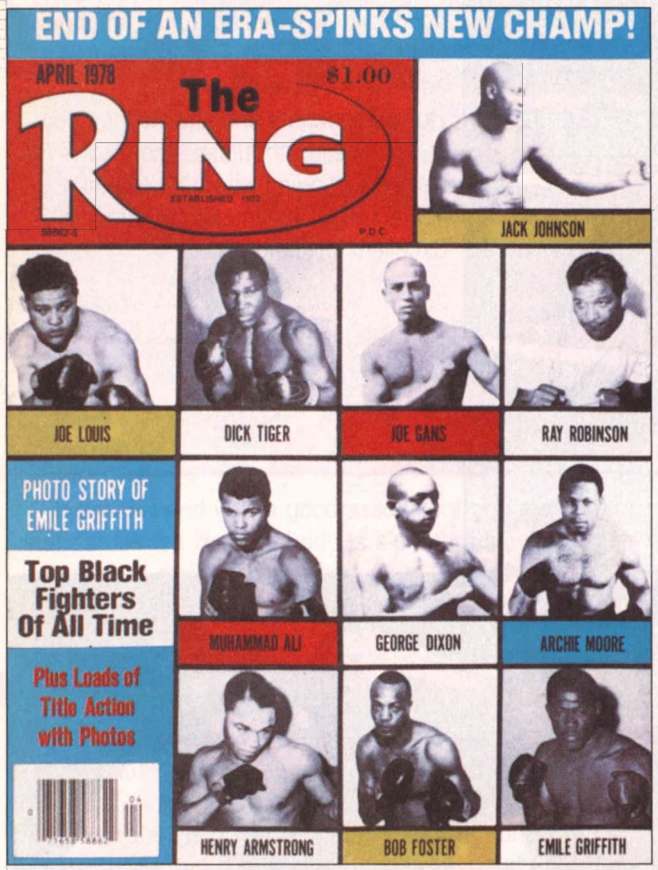
Can his chin hold up under Mosley's offensive bursts? How will he deal with Mosley's speed? What will he do if he gets behind on points early? Can he become the first to stop Sugar Shane?

Will he be able to take advantage of Cotto's penchant for starting slowly? Can he endure Cotto's body attack? Will he want to bang with Cotto or box him? Will his age finally show?

The Outcome

Cotto won't be too wary of Mosley's power early on, possibly paying a price by getting buzzed once or twice. But as the fight progresses, Cotto's relentless pressure will gradually overcome Mosley's competitive drive. The Puerto Rican powerpuncher will wear down Mosley and duplicate what he did against Judah, stopping Sugar Shane in the 11th.

August 1978



COVER STORY: "Top Black Fighters Of All Time" by Lester Bromberg was the fourth in an ethnic series, which had already covered Italian-American, Irish-Americans, and Jewish-American boxers. Bromberg, who began his newspaper career in 1931, was well qualified for the job, having covered many of the fighters he selected, including eight of the 10 fighters pictured on the cover. His choice for the top spot was perhaps a bit surprisingly for a writer who was on the beat before Joe Louis turned pro.

"Speaking only as a majority of one, I fight off the claims of older-generation compatriots, I stay with a modern. I put Muhammad Ali, a.k.a. Cassius Clay, at the peak," wrote Bromberg.

Henry Armstrong, Joe Louis, Ray Robinson, Jack Johnson, Charley Burley, Ezzard Charles, Archie Moore, Joe Gans, Ike Williams, and Jersey Joe Walcott round out Bromberg's top 10 contenders. Then there is what amounts to an honorable mention group that includes Emile Griffith, Dick Tiger, Bob Foster, and George Dixon.

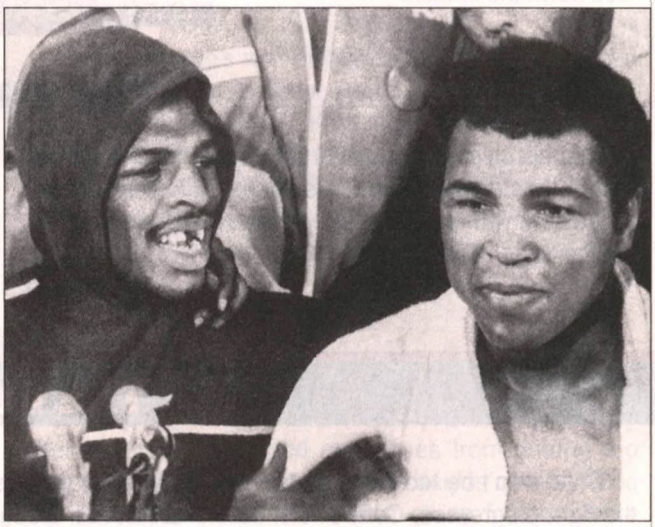
"Black-Americans have vaulted from Tom Molineaux and his slave era to the world of reasonably free men. Long forcibly removed from competition with whites, they have since won every division of boxing at one time or another. Today they still dominate almost all the classes. There would be no pro boxing without Black-Americans."

"End Of An Era—Spinks Is Heavy Champ" was obviously shoehorned into the issue at the last minute due to Leon's momentous upset victory over Ali, as it was afforded only two pages, almost half of which is devoted to the undercard. Even so, Las Vegas correspondent Shirley Norman still managed to convey the significance of the occasion:

"In an incredible night of fistic history, Leon Spinks snatched the world heavyweight title away from the legend that was Muhammad Ali. This was the stunning climax of a Cinderella story for the 24-year-old ex-Marine who rocketed from a St. Louis ghetto to fame as an Olympic gold medal winner in 1976. The Spinks victory

World Champions

Heavyweight: Leon Spinks
Light Heavyweight: vacant
Middleweight: Rodrigo Valdes
Junior Middleweight: Eddie Gazo
Welterweight: Carlos Palomino
Junior Welterweight: Wilfred Benitez
Lightweight: Roberto Duran
Junior Lightweight: Samuel Serrano
Featherweight: vacant
Bantamweight: Jorge Lujan
Flyweight: Miguel Canto

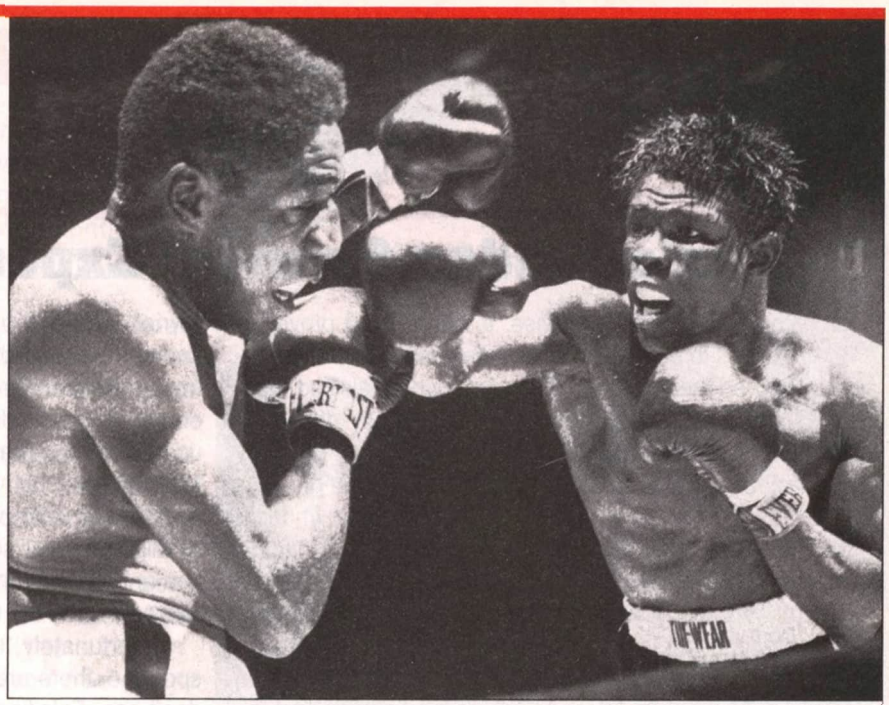


Spinks jokes with dethroned and swollen Ali after upset

was the greatest upset in heavyweight history since the man then called Cassius Clay took the title from Sonny Liston in Miami on February 25, 1964."

"Duran Undisputed World Light King" is Norman's account of Roberto Duran's 12th-round knockout of arch-rival Esteban DeJesus to unify the WBC and WBA 135-pound titles at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas.

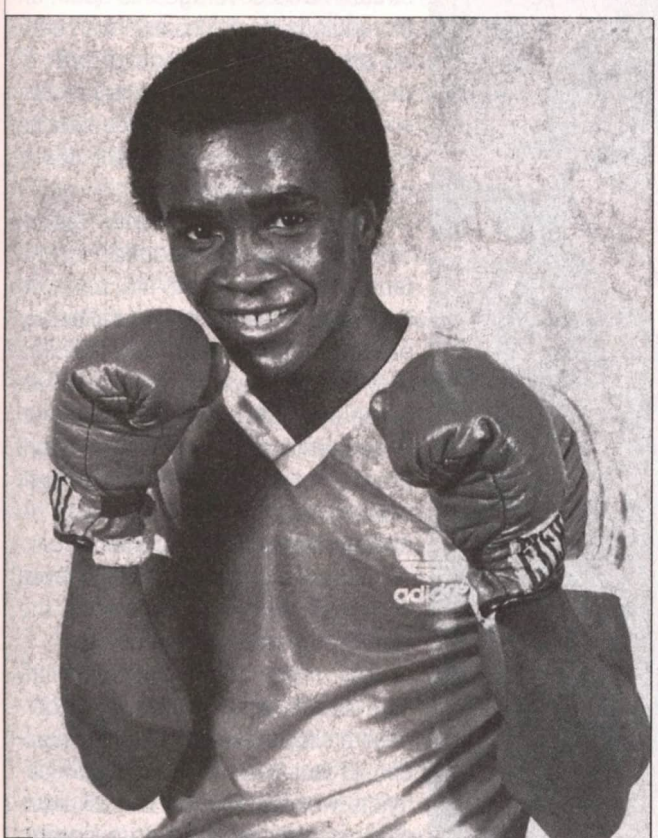
"The two started their bitter battle on Saturday at the early morning weigh-in, when DeJesus took a swing at his opponent, and Duran countered with an attempted blow that was stopped by his trainers," wrote Norman. "Their mutual hatred was evident from the opening bell of the title fight. DeJesus came out swinging, jabbing, and hitting. Duran played a waiting game in the early rounds—a game that proved his mettle as a world champion."



Griffith (pictured outpointing Luis Rodriguez in 1963) was recalled in wake of his retirement

"Emile Griffith Remembered" by Charles D. Brown is a bittersweet tribute to the recently retired former welterweight and middleweight champions and is accompanied by a 10-page photo retrospective of Griffith's Hall of Fame career.

"Emile Griffith had a lot of the immortal in him," wrote Brown, "also a lot of muscle, a lot of smarts, and, late in his career, a touch of the Don Quixote."



A young Leonard was already making big bucks

"Leonard Handles Diaz With Ease" by Ed Scullen covers Sugar Ray's sixth professional bout, a second-round knockout of Hector Diaz in front of approximately 7,000 fans at the D.C. Armory in Washington.

"The 21-year-old Leonard reportedly received close to $15,000 for his efforts against Diaz," wrote Scullen. "These kind of figures, when racked up by a relative novice, do not sit well with many members of the fight crowd, but the young man's drawing ability may well keep the fight game alive here."

"Canto Wins Close Nod Over Oguma" by Joe Koizumi details WBC flyweight king Miguel Canto's split decision over Shoji Oguma in front of approximately 8,000 fans at the Koriyama City (Japan) Gym to tally the 11th defense of the title he'd originally won from Oguma in January '75.

"Truly, it was a very close 15-rounder, so that there would have been controversy even if the official verdict had pointed to the more aggressive Oguma, since his strong punches were too often averted by Canto's superior defensive skills," reported Koizumi. "However, Miguel again found Oguma's left-handed style hard to deal with, and the champ's retirement seems near."

Canto went on to decision Oguma a third time, later in '78, and make two other successful defenses before losing the belt to Chan Hee Park in March '79. Oguma kept plugging along and dethroned Park to take the belt in May 1980. ■

The Fight Doctor

By Margaret Goodman, M.D.

Boxing's Hidden Scandal Exposed

To obtain a boxing license, a fighter must prove his fitness to box, and that includes passing state-determined medical tests. Therefore, when falsified medical tests are submitted, the boxing community and state commissions should do more than blink an eye. But they don't. Instead, it's business as usual; the show must go on.

On July 30, *The New York Times* published an in-depth investigative story on the front page entitled, "In Boxing's Underbelly, A Blind Eye To Fighters' Health" by John Eligon and Duff Wilson. During months of research, the writers accessed countless medical records of fighters who fought in states with high-profile commissions, including Nevada, California, Texas, and Arizona. Two of the fighters died following their bouts. *The Times* also documented several cases where fighters were cleared to compete in Nevada when the medical forms were never signed by the fighters.

This was the case for Martin Sanchez who traveled to Las Vegas from Mexico City for the biggest fight of his life, in July 2005. Sanchez' testing came from a Tijuana clinic owned and run by Dr. Ramon Cruz. This clinic is well known to big-name promoters and fighters. Sanchez died from injuries suffered in his bout with Rustam Nugaev, so it could never be determined whether or not he *actually* underwent any prefight testing that would have included an MRI of his brain. *The Times*, however, interviewed Alejandro Juarez, who fought on the same card. According to Eligon and Wilson, "Juarez said Cruz had not examined him and he was unaware that his promoter, Ignacio Huizar, had submitted the form."

Unfortunately, this problem is like cockroaches. If you spot one, there are thousands behind the cabinet door you don't see. Falsified medical documents are pervasive. *The Times* article and a follow-up piece a few days later should have ignited a firestorm of criticism of commissions, promoters, our system of review, and a needed push toward federal legislation of boxing.

So, where is our outrage?

In many respects, boxing has become a niche sport, and often when it receives mainstream news coverage it is about an incredulous decision, an incarcerated athlete, or some other sort of negative news. Consequently, when something of this magnitude hits the front page, the prevailing attitude is usually, "Oh, it's just boxing."

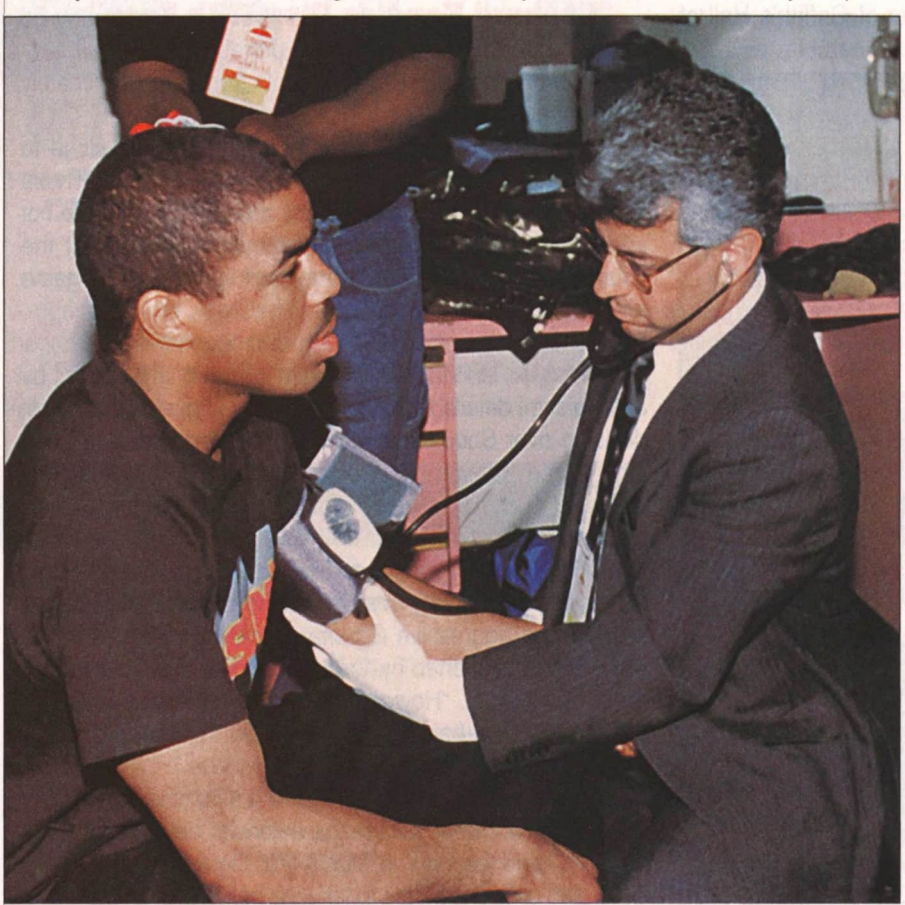


PHOTO BY FRANK VITUCCI

Unlike David Reid, not all fighters' medical tests are legitimate

The Boxing Professional Amendments Act was introduced for the fourth time this year. And as noted by Eligon, "The bill has unanimously passed in the Senate in each of the previous three years, but it has fallen short in the House each time ... Proponents of the bill say it would provide for the type of enforcement and oversight to crack down on medical improprieties in boxing."

Okay, good things come to those who wait, but in this instance the wait has become the excuse.

Few major commissions, including Nevada, would welcome a federal commission looking over its shoulder. In fact, several Washington lobbyists working to stop this bill have strong ties to Nevada's casino industry. It is one reason why the bill

failed in the House last year.

Irrespective of documented fraudulent medical records on fighters, Keith Kizer, the executive director of the Nevada State Athletic Commission, told *The Times* he welcomed federal legislation, but was confident of Nevada's medical process. I wonder what the family of Martin Sanchez would say about that.

After serving as Nevada's Medical Advisory Board Chairman for seven years, I know that the problem is simple to fix and would cost little money to enforce. The steps I would take to solve the problem are as follows:

- Stop allowing fighters, trainers, managers, and promoters to submit medical test results. All medical tests must come *directly* from the clinic or laboratory where they were performed.
- Results need to be submitted with photo identification, and the facility/physician must sign a form attesting to their validity and that they confirmed the fighter's identity.
- Only approved medical facilities should be able to submit results.
- Commissions must verify results via telephone.
- Penalties will result if falsified documents are submitted.
- Commissions must investigate these documents and hold all accountable.
- Commissions should work to raise fighter awareness, as many athletes are never advised as to what medical tests are required and why.

Why have these cost-effective recommendations not been put in place? The answer is simple: money and power.

Boxing matches generate tax revenue. When you calculate the number of cards and ticket prices, especially in a state such as Nevada, where many big events take place, the dollar figures become significant to legislatures. There is more than one commissioner who wants his state to be "user-friendly," meaning they open their doors to bring fights in and want to lessen the burden (and expense) on promoters. Furthermore, promoters hate bout cancellations, which can happen when fighters start failing medical tests.

No one wants injured or dead fighters, but it is easy to rationalize turning a blind eye to a falsified test that would have most likely been normal if the fighter had gone through the process.

In some cases, however, it's a matter of life and death, and boxing will never regain the respect it has lost if fighters' health and welfare is treated with so little regard.

***

Two hotly contested bouts took place on the July 21 undercard of Bernard Hopkins-Winky Wright pay-per-view. The fights were praised for their brutality and the fighters were lauded for their heart. Nonetheless, the two losers in those bouts, 30-year-old Oscar Larios and 21-year-old Czar Amonsot, suffered career-ending cerebral hemorrhages. Each was hospitalized for a short time, though neither appeared to have brain damage.

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Amonsot had already suffered a brain bleed when this photo was taken following his loss to Michael Katsidis

Sadly, in an attempt to spin the situation, these two incidents were downplayed. The commission called the bleeding "minor," HBO mentioned the injuries as an afterthought on a repeat telecast, and the media barely noted that two fighters were hospitalized and that their careers were over in *one* night on *one* telecast. Moreover, there is no such thing in boxing as a "minor" subdural.

Perhaps the media and public's lust for blood is misplaced. That lust should be aimed at a fight for federal legislation and stronger medical requirements. Larios and Amonsot survived that night, but other fighters might not be so fortunate. ■

By Jim Bagg

Real Fighters Don't Dance!

Boxing has been known, since even before the Baggarooney was born (in other words, a *loooong* freakin' time), as "The Manly Art Of Self-Defense." You know what the key word there is? "Manly." As in hairy-chested and lugey-hocking. As in belchy, flatulent, and proud of it.

As such, there are certain things fighters just don't do. They don't crochet. They don't change diapers. They don't sit around discussing their feelings. They don't watch the Oxygen network. They don't listen to Air Supply.

And they sure as hell don't dance.

When a fighter has a big bout coming up, he's supposed to make like Rocky Balboa in the fourth movie: Grow a beard, head off into the mountains, cut off communication with the outside world, and turn yourself into a piece of iron. So what's Floyd Mayweather doing to prepare for his December showdown with Ricky Hatton? He's appearing on *Dancing With The Stars*.

The Baggman is proud to tell you he has never watched one second of that show. Why would he watch that show? It's Bagg*man*, not Bagglady. *Dancing With The Stars* is for housewives and grandmoms. And last the Original Baggsta checked, he ain't either one of those things.

Now, maybe it's not right to pass judgment on a show without having seen it, but the Baggmometer has a pretty fair idea of what goes on there: A "celebrity" is paired with a professional dancer, and together they practice their dance moves and then perform for the television audience. So it's dancing, dancing, and more dancing. Which, as the Baggy-Waggy noted earlier, is something real fighters don't do.

The Baggophile knows what you're going to say: But Sugar Ray Robinson danced. And so did Evander Holyfield and Laila Ali.

Don Baggleone's response: None of them were real fighters at the time. Robinson did his little song-and-dance act during his first retirement, stunk at it, and went back to boxing. He saw the light, and if he were alive today, he'd tell you that real fighters don't dance. Holyfield, who appeared on the first season of *Dancing For The Benefit Of Bored Housewives*, had, in his last fight before becoming Mr. Twinkletoes, gotten dominated by Larry Donald—obviously he was experiencing some kind of emotional breakdown. He wasn't in his right mind, and he gets a pass. (Plus, word is he cut a rug about as well as Howard Cosell's hair stylist.) And Laila Ali—well, the joke that is women's boxing is a whole other topic for a whole other column.

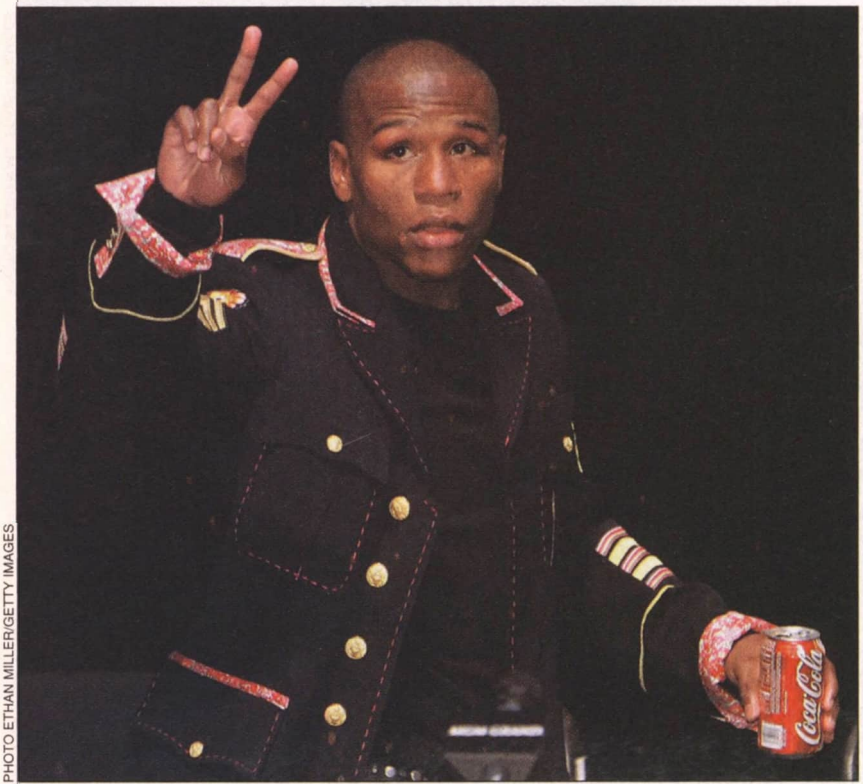


PHOTO ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Now that he's a dancer, "Pretty Boy" is even dressing like Michael Jackson

You know who's a great dancer? Michael Jackson. That's the kind of "man" who belongs on the dance floor. Until we see him put what's left of his nose on the line and enter the boxing ring, no boxers should be entering his domain and stepping on the dance floor.

So why is Mayweather doing this? Well, obviously he isn't the manliest fighter there ever was. For starters, he calls himself "Pretty Boy." He's been known to wear pink gloves and trunks decorated with fur. And as far as his fighting style goes, yes, every fighter is a bad-ass on some level, but as fighters go, Mayweather is about as disinterested in standing and trading as they come. Mayweather isn't what the Baggalammajamma would call a runner in the ring, but he can be a bit of a dancer. Pop

Not even the immortal Sugar Ray Robinson could make a success of dancing

out a speedy punch and pivot away. Shimmy his shoulders along the ropes and spin out of range. Dip down, spring up with a punch, and tiptoe to the other side of the ring.

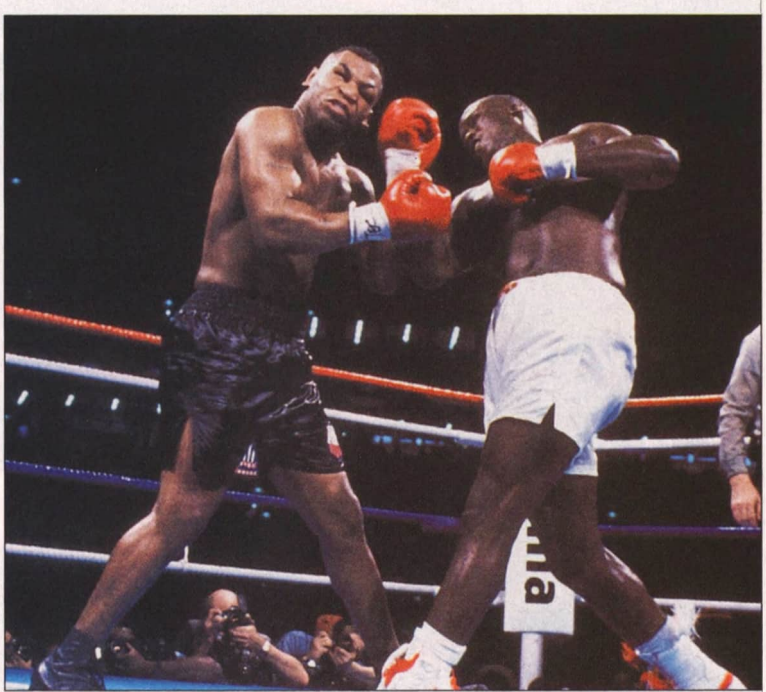
Mayweather is a natural for *Dancing With The Stars*. Except for one little thing: He's supposed to be a *fighter*. He makes millions of dollars to punch other guys in the face, to give them bloody lips and swollen eyes. How can a guy who does that for a living—and who happens to be the reigning pound-for-pound king, meaning he serves as a key ambassador for his sport whether he likes it or not—dress up in front of America in tight, bulge-hugging pants and sparkly shirts and act like he cares about doing the samba better than Joe Soap Opera Star or Jane Washed Up Actress?

When it comes to the art of self-defense, few in history have done it better than Mayweather. But when it comes to the *manly* art of self-defense, Mayweather is questionable at best. Pretty Boy Floyd needs to decide whether he's a fighter or a dancer, because he can't be both. A *boxer* and a dancer? Maybe. But a *fighter* and a dancer? No way.

The only thing fighting and dancing should have in common is the cliche "it takes two to tango." Unfortunately for Mayweather, Hatton isn't his dance partner—he's his opponent. You don't fight *with* someone. You fight *against* someone. And if you come into the ring thinking about dancing with the stars, it probably won't be long before you're seeing stars.

Upsetting The Baggareeno: When Appalachian State shocked Michigan in the opening week of the college football season, the talking heads and typing hands all immediately sought to place it in historical context. Some were content to call it "the biggest upset in college football history." Some compared it to other sports and, of course, called it "the biggest upset since Douglas-Tyson." And some lost their minds altogether and called it "the biggest upset in sports history," meaning they considered it a bigger upset than Buster vs. Iron Mike. Presumably, these were the same people who couldn't name a half-dozen active fighters, still think Tyson was better than Holyfield, and called Mayweather-De La Hoya "the fight to save boxing." In other words, they're a bunch of halfwits who are completely and totally unqualified to comment on the fight game.

Here's why Douglas-Tyson has the edge over Appalachian State-Michigan: because Tyson was ranked number one in the world, he was the champ, the absolute best, beyond dispute; Michigan was number five. No matter how far off the charts Appalachian State was (and they were the two-time defending Division I-AA champions, so they weren't *that* far off the charts), how can a defeat of *numero cinco* compare to a defeat of *numero uno*? Not to mention, that number-five ranking was based on what, exactly? The pre-season poll. In other words, Michigan had done nothing to



Douglas-Tyson: Still the biggest upset of all-time

earn it. It was purely conjecture, derived from looking at how they did the previous year, how they looked on paper this year, and the opinions of a bunch of writers who surely don't find time to watch every college football game and couldn't possibly have known Michigan's team as well as the boxing world knew Mike Tyson in 1990.

Comparing betting odds between football and boxing is almost pointless, but the Baggosmith will do it anyway, because it happens to support his argument. Douglas was a 42-1 underdog. Appalachian State opened as 28½-point 'dogs, and closed at 31½ points. For what it's worth, that made ASU only the *fourth*-biggest underdog in recorded college football history to post a victory. And yes, comparing boxing odds with football odds is like comparing apples and pomegranates, but 42 is a much bigger number than 31½.

So, everybody, just settle down. Appalachian State 34, Michigan 32 is not the greatest upset of all-time. It's a wonderful Cinderella story, and a huge win for little guys everywhere. But Douglas-Tyson is still the upset against which all others must be judged. Tyson was invincible. Michigan was just a 0-0 team expected to have a nice season. There is no comparison.

Not Jones-ing Anymore: Sorry if it seems like La Baggaracha is in nonstop complaint mode this month, but, hey, you try surviving on a diet of Ramen noodles and day-old bagels because your landlord just jacked up the rent and see if you aren't a little bit moody. So the negativity will continue. As long as matchups like Roy Jones-Felix Trinidad are coming together a full six years after they stopped being attractive, what reason is there for a positive outlook?

Sometimes, a fight happens six years after it's supposed

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Bagg isn't buying the battle of the losers between Trinidad (inset) and Jones (above)

to and still matters, still makes sense, still seems worth doing—such as Holyfield-Tyson, for example. But Jones vs. Trinidad? Now? Really? The chinless wonder vs. Winky's speedbag? In 2001, before "Tito" got schooled by Bernard Hopkins, this would have been a hot fight between two of the top three rated pound-for-pound fighters on the planet. But then Trinidad did get carved up by Hopkins, retired soon after, came back, didn't win a single round against Winky Wright, and retired again. By the time he fights Jones in January, he'll have been out of the ring for 32 months. He just doesn't matter anymore. He's still popular, potentially still exciting, but he's about as relevant as Herman's Hermits.

And the same could be said for Jones. Three losses in a 17-month stretch, two by kayo, one of those knockouts being of the "get the hell out of the sport before you get seriously injured" variety—and now he's "rebounded" with wins over Prince Badi Ajamu and Anthony Hanshaw, and we're supposed to care about his career again? Sorry, no can do.

And, to top it all off, they're fighting at 170 pounds, which means Trinidad won't be in great shape (remember how Wright's body looked when he fought Hopkins at 170?), and Jones will be absolutely torturing himself to make weight. So not only are both fighters a decade or so past their primes, but they're going to be physically compromised by more than just age.

Anyone who pays $50 for this farce will be getting what they deserve. As for the Baggpipe? His $50 will be going toward day-old bagels. At least, unlike Jones and Trinidad, they're only 24 hours past their primes.

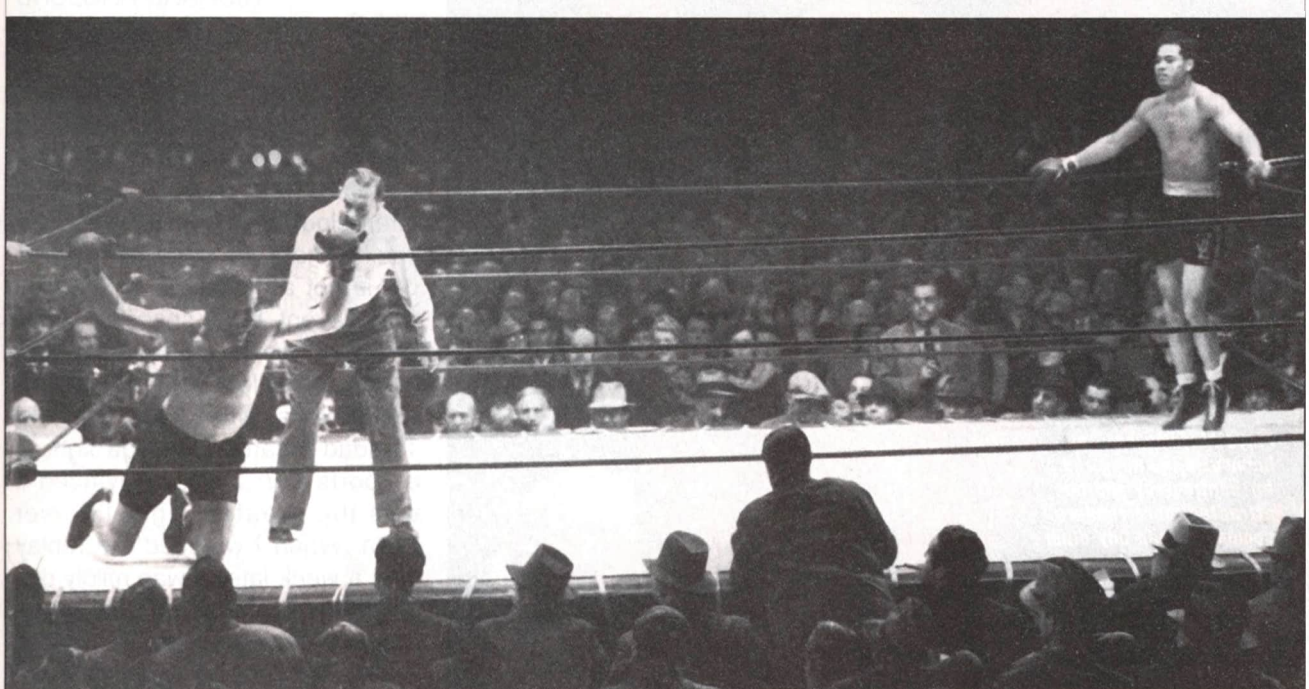
Opening Up The Mailbagg: To all of you thin-skinned ninnies out there who've sent letters of complaint about the Baggomatic to Nigel Collins over the years because you didn't have a way of contacting the living legend himself, well, it's your lucky day. After a lifetime of writing his flawless copy on an old Remington typewriter, the Baggodactyl finally has himself one of these newfangled computers (and by "newfangled," he means "used-fangled" and highly discounted), and he even set up an e-mail address: Baggmeister@yahoo.com. So please, by all means, feel free to begin bitching and moaning directly to the Baggopotamus. Just prepare to be skewered for your stupidity in a future column.

The Baggtastic vs. you people? The world hasn't seen a mismatch so lopsided since Joe Louis-Jack Roper.

And The Stingray Goes To ... Michael Domingo, who got Team Philippines rolling in their eventual rout of Team Mexico by shocking the 22-0 (16) Miguel "Mickey" Roman on the August 11 "Boxing World Cup" card in Sacramento. Hey, unbeaten prospects lose all the time. But it's not often they lose to guys with 31-14-2 (12) records, guys who've lost everywhere from Thailand to Japan to France, guys who've endured stretches where they've won five out of 14 fights. And if they are going to lose to guys like that, they aren't supposed to do it by getting shut out on all three cards over six rounds.

But that's precisely what happened to Roman. And that's why Domingo gets himself one of those pretty little Stingray Awards. Now he can take it home to the Philippines, wave it in Manny Pacquiao's face, and sing, "Nanny-nanny-boo-boo." That's right, Pac-Man, you don't have a Stingray, but Michael Domingo does. Plus, Domingo's never lost a national election. Is there any question who The Man in Filipino boxing is? ■

Jim Bagg can be contacted at baggmeister@yahoo.com



Louis knocks out Roper in the first round

[Come Out Writing]

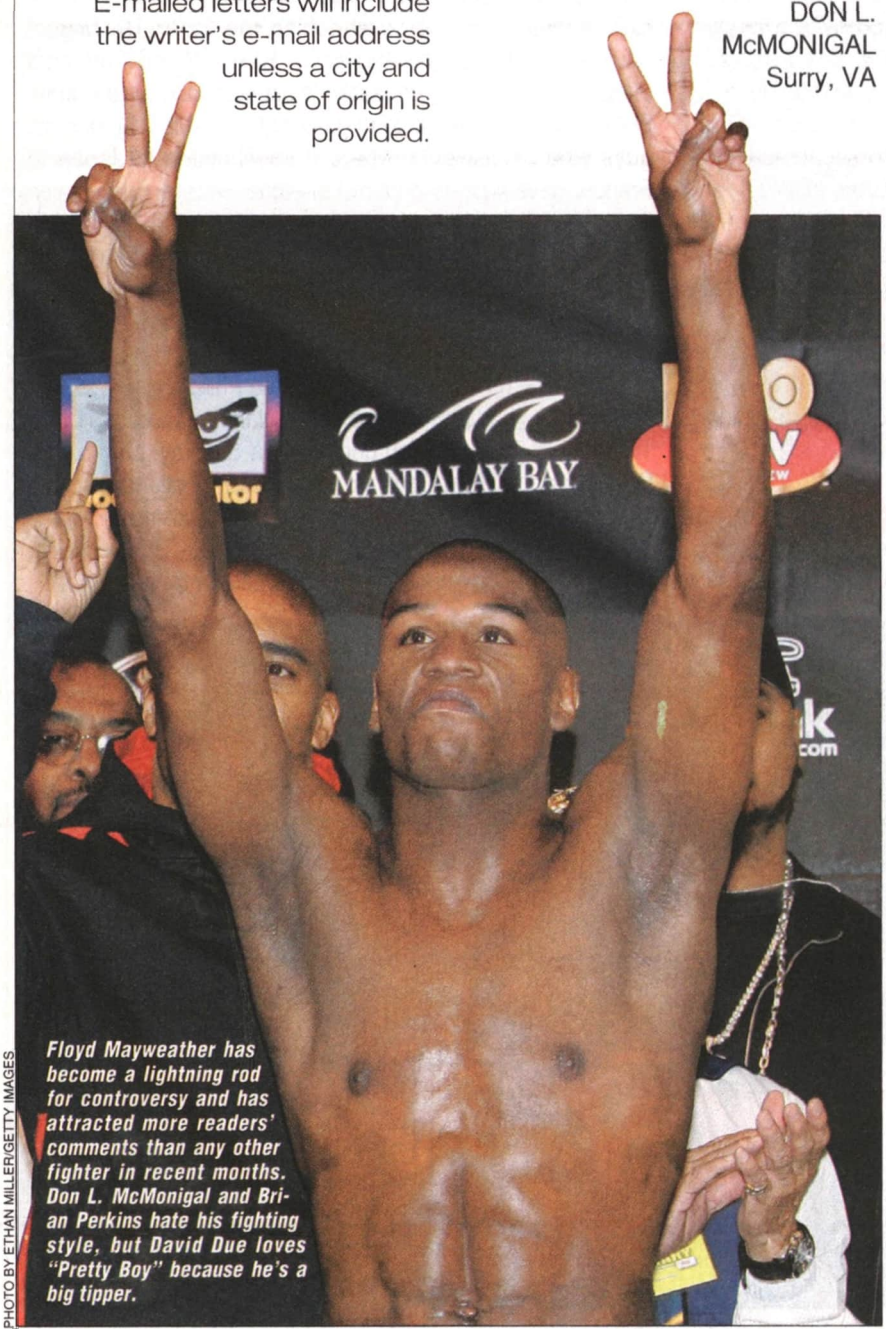
Letters may be edited for reasons of space and clarity. Send your comments to Come Out Writing, THE RING, P.O. Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19034.

Or e-mail letters to comeoutwriting@yahoo.com. E-mailed letters will include the writer's e-mail address unless a city and state of origin is provided.

Running And Hugging

No matter how you try to sugar-coat the recent Mayweather-De La Hoya and Hopkins-Wight contests, neither qualified as a boxing match. "Pretty Boy" performed like he was at a track meet, and Hopkins, with all his hugging, like he was at a family reunion.

DON L. McMONIGAL
Surry, VA



Floyd Mayweather has become a lightning rod for controversy and has attracted more readers' comments than any other fighter in recent months. Don L. McMonigal and Brian Perkins hate his fighting style, but David Due loves "Pretty Boy" because he's a big tipper.

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

I'm tired of Floyd Mayweather's running. He'll be the naturally bigger guy against Ricky Hatton. If he doesn't go for the knockout, and even appears to settle for a decision, I'm changing my vote to Manny Pacquiao for best pound-for pound fighter. You get in this game to fight, not pitty-pat. The way Mayweather "fights" is not good for boxing.

BRIAN PERKINS
Portsmouth, OH

The Greatest Fight

I have just finished reading Robert Cassidy's beautiful paean to his father ("The Greatest Fight I Ever Saw") in the November 2007 issue. I have always been inspired by Robert's writing, and I believe that this is the finest piece he has written for THE RING. Just as Robert takes enormous pride in his father's boxing achievements. Mr. Cassidy must surely be swelling with pride at his son's writing prowess.

RICHARD HAGLUND
Mound City, KS

Nigel Collins hit an important truth in his essay about the Matt Franklin-Marvin Johnson fight: that our judgment of past events is often clouded by nostalgia for our youth. That's because each memory is not an accurate recollection of the event, but a snapshot of the last time we thought about that event, complete with emotional attachments. When I saw the Felix Trinidad-Ricardo Mayorga fight at a sports bar, I was convinced it was the greatest fight I'd ever seen. When I watched the replay only a week later, I was mildly disappointed. I'm glad that upon watching the fight again Mr. Collins found that "not all memories are distorted by the fog of time."

Especially since I shelled out $400 for Van Halen tickets.

AARON S. BAYLEY
Toronto, Ontario

World Champion Tipper

All of you Floyd Mayweather-haters out there should know something: Floyd is the best tipper you could ever come across in the service industry. He enjoys dining out and is known to sometimes leave a tip of more than 50 percent on a bill that's already in the hundreds. You can well believe the service staff in all of Vegas loves him. Come sit in my section, champ.

DAVID DUE
daviddue@cox.net

Way Past Primetime

The Felix Trinidad-Roy Jones fight is about six years too late. Roy would have dominated and destroyed Tito back in 2001 or 2002, but I think Trinidad has a much better shot against him now. Jones is lights years from the fighter he was before suffering devastating knockout defeats against Antonio Tarver and Glen Johnson. I believe Trinidad is the fresher fighter, coming off a lengthy layoff, and despite having been thoroughly dominated in his two lone defeats at the hands of Bernard Hopkins and Winky Wright, he was never knocked unconscious like Roy.

Look for a boring chess match with Jones taking absolutely no chances to exploit Tito's suspect chin. Tito will swing for the fences and miss. But if he catches Roy, it won't take clean shots to finish him.

ANDREW KANG
Fullerton, CA

Merchant vs. Kellerman

I just want to let Jeff Ryan know that he is out of his mind to think that Larry Merchant is a much better analyst than Max Kellerman ("Ryan Out Loud," November 2007). Merchant degrades fighters, has no idea what it's like to be in the ring, and unless he likes the fighter, cuts them off every time they attempt to thank whomever it is they need to thank after a fight. Kellerman interviews each fighter with respect and dignity.

DAVID BERMUDEZ
San Ramon, CA

HBO would be crazy to try to replace Larry Merchant. Merchant always asks the tough questions, and Jim Lampley and Emanuel Steward seem lost when Merchant has the night off. I'm glad HBO decided to keep Larry, which will also keep me paying $20 a month to watch HBO.

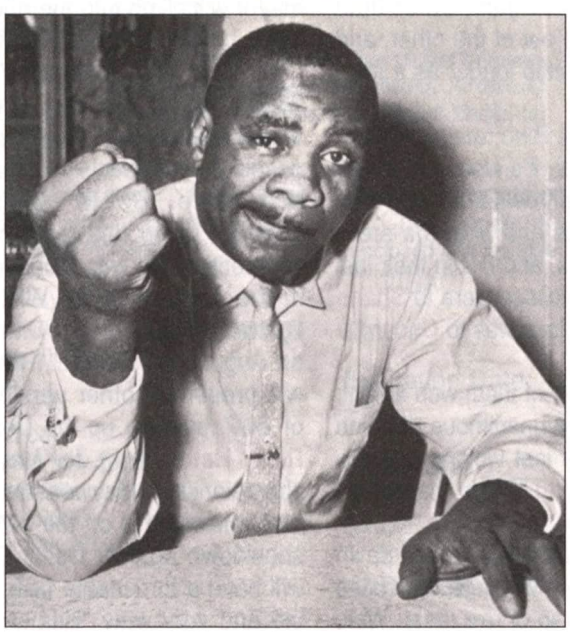
PAUL M. SOTACK
Buffalo, NY

Let's Do It Again

I loved Eric Raskin's story in the August 2007 issue on hypothetical rematches taking place 10 years after the original fight. I always loved to speculate on "what if?" events. With that in mind, here are a few ideas for what I hope will be your next story on this subject:

- Muhammad Ali vs. Jimmy Young
- Larry Holmes vs. Gerry Cooney
- Larry Holmes vs. Tim Witherspoon
- Larry Holmes vs. Carl Williams
- Marvin Hagler vs. Thomas Hearns
- Evander Holyfield vs. George Foreman
- Pernell Whitaker vs. Julio Cesar Chavez
- Roy Jones vs. James Toney
- Oscar De La Hoya vs. Pernell Whitaker

MARC T. THORNTON
Virginia Beach, VA



Reader Ron Zorzes enjoyed both our recent article on George Chuvalo and pictorial tribute to Sonny Liston, but wished there had been more images of the former heavyweight champion. So here's one more Liston shot for you, Ron.

George, Sonny, & Floyd

I was so pleased to read the article on George Chuvalo in the September 2007 issue of THE RING ("The Pain Never Goes Away"). He was an incredibly durable fighter, but even more durable as a husband and father, as evidenced by the tremendous tragedies he has endured in his personal life, as you so well documented. Canada is proud of him and I thank you for a wonderfully insightful article on this tremendously courageous man.

My next issue deals with the recent "Pictorial Tribute To Sonny Liston" in the November '07 issue. My only complaint is that I wish there could have been more pictures. It is so sad that Liston wasn't treated better while he was alive. No doubt he brought some of the bad treatment on himself, but when you consider the life he had as a child, I think his accomplishments are outstanding.

Now for my final comment: If Sonny warranted a pictorial tribute, then the man he twice defeated, Floyd Patterson, certainly warrants as much. Floyd was an outstanding fighter in my opinion, but he was a great role model and a credit to, as Joe Louis once was described, the human race.

RON ZORZES
Thunder Bay, Ontario ■

By Joe Santoliquito

Vargas And Mayorga Brawl For The Fun Of It

Ever go to a nightclub or a bar and have your attention drawn to a loud argument that slaps down the din of the crowd and eventually evolves into a fistfight? Tables fly. Fists fly. People fly.

If so, you may have an idea of what could erupt when **Fernando Vargas** meets **Ricardo Mayorga** at a catchweight of 162 pounds on November 23, at the Staples Center, in Los Angeles, California, on HBO Pay-Per-View.

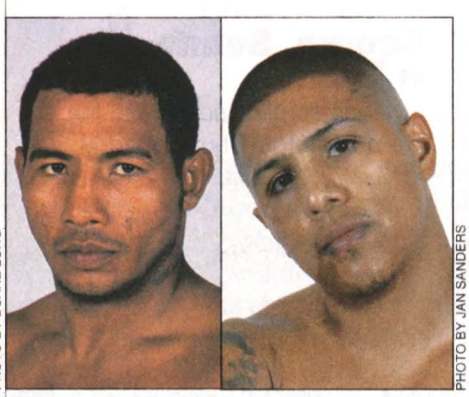


PHOTO BY DUANE LONG

PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

Mayorga and Vargas should provide fireworks

The fight was originally scheduled for September 8, but was postponed when Vargas was diagnosed with anemia, a blood condition that results from a lower number of healthy red blood cells and can lead to fatigue.

Vargas is calling this his farewell fight. But really, both Vargas, 26-4 (22), and Mayorga, 28-6-1 (23), are past their primes. Neither has anything to gain, other than money, the chance to knock the snot out of the other, and quite possibly the right to hang on a little longer as a marquee name in boxing.

Vargas and Mayorga are not in THE RING ratings. A decisive win by either may not change that. It's also safe to say that neither fighter could pose any real threat to today's elite 160-pounders. That's because Vargas and Mayorga are a combined 2-5 in their last seven fights, and 0-3 in their last three—each getting stopped (Vargas losses were to **Shane Mosley**, KO 10 and KO 6; Mayorga's loss was to **Oscar De La Hoya**, KO 6).

It's been over two years since either of them won a fight. Vargas, on August 20, 2005, scored a unanimous decision against **Javier Castillejo**; Mayorga's last victory, came a week earlier, against **Michele Piccirillo** to win the vacant WBC junior middleweight strap.

So why are we so compelled to watch two broken-down fighters go at it? Simple, Vargas and Mayorga will battle like two hungry lions clawing for a scrap of raw meat. Well, in this case, two weathered lions who have been in their share of wars and can no longer get out of the way of an incoming punch.

The only thing missing will be a back alley and some beer. Should be fun.

Listen Up

Kermit Cintron, 28-1 (26), will defend the IBF welterweight title against **Jesse Feliciano**, 19-5-3 (9), on the Vargas-Mayorga undercard. Cintron has stopped his last four opponents, while Feliciano is 3-4-1 in his last eight fights. Also added to that card is **Joaquin Alcine**, 29-0 (18), defending the WBA junior middleweight crown against **Christophe Canclaux**, 34-2 (20), who is on a nine-fight winning streak, dating back to September 2005 ... On November 17, HBO is scheduled to feature lightweight contenders **Joan Guzman**, 27-0 (17), against **Humberto Soto**, 42-5-2 (26), from the Sycuan Resort and Casino in El Cajon, California. Soto has stopped his last six opponents, while Guzman has not won a fight inside the distance since February 2004 ... Another great fight has been added to the **Miguel Cotto-Shane Mosley** card, November 10, at Madison Square Garden: THE RING's world lightweight champion, **Joel Casamayor**, 34-3-1 (21), takes on **Jose Santa Cruz**, 25-2 (14). It will mark the first time Casamayor will climb into the ring since beating the late **Diego Corrales** on October 7, 2006, when he won the world lightweight championship by split decision. The last time Santa Cruz stepped up to this level of competition, he was stopped in the 10th round by WBC lightweight titlist **David Diaz**, on August 12, 2006 ... HBO will present another version of *24/7*, building up the December 8 **Floyd Mayweather-Ricky Hatton** fight, for Mayweather's world welterweight championship. Mayweather may have stole the show the first time with his off-the-wall antics leading up to the May showdown against Oscar De La Hoya, but "Pretty Boy" will have a formidable task ahead in out-dueling the affable and very witty "Hitman" this time. The show debuts Sunday, November 18 (10:00-10:30 p.m. ET/PT) and will run on subsequent Sundays, November 25 and December 2. ■

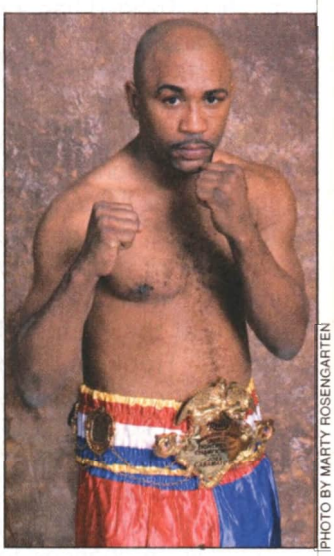


PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Casamayor returns after over a year hiatus from ring

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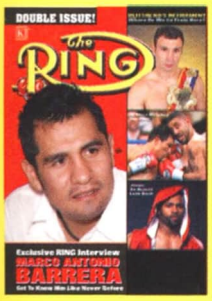
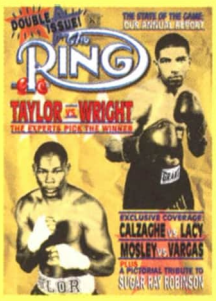
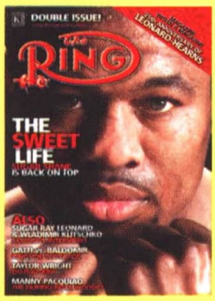
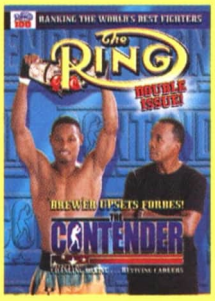
Limited quantities of *The Ring's* popular 132-page double issues are available by mail order. Act now before they're gone!









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Vol. III, 2005: Cover Story: Glen Johnson—Fighter of the Year. **Special Bonus Issue:** The Year In Pictures. **Also Inside:** Year-end awards, Vitali Klitschko, Jermain Taylor & Jeff Lacy.

Vol. IV, 2005: Cover Story: 20 At 40: How Much More Can Hopkins Accomplish Before 41? **Magazine Within A Magazine:** 20 Years Later: Hagler vs. Hearns Revisited. **Also Inside:** Trinidad-Wright preview, Hasim Rahman, Tszyu-Hatton preview, Larios-McCullough, Max Schmeling.

Vol. V, 2005: Cover Story: "Pretty Boy" Floyd: Just As Great As He Says He Is … Maybe Even Better. **Special Bonus Section:** The Pound-For-Pound Elite. **Also Inside:** Tarver-Jones II, Mike Tyson, quitters.

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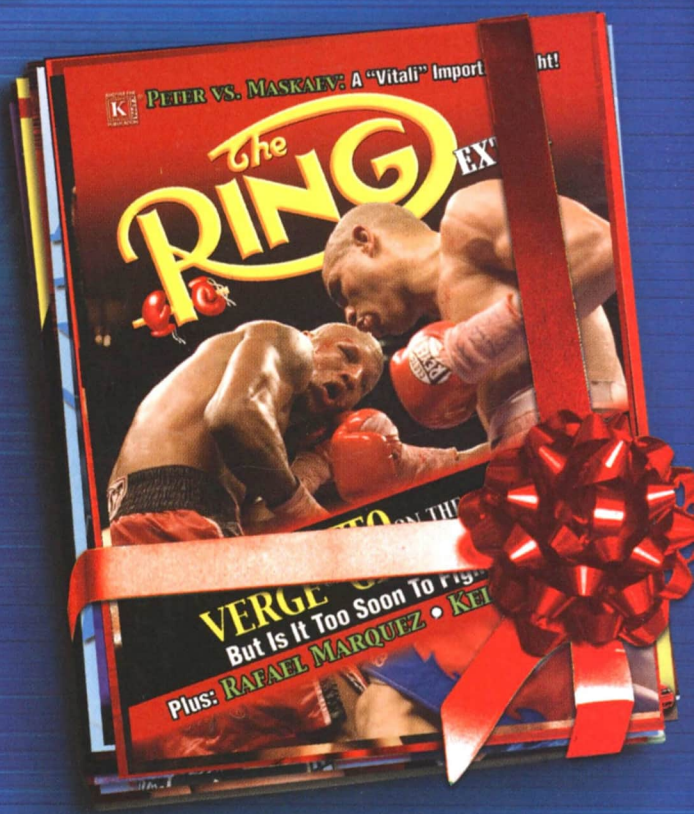

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